

# THE Spiritual Magazine.

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## "NO MORE METAPHYSICS."

By EPES SARGENT.

THE metaphysicians seem to be in a bad way. If we may believe all we hear, they are soon likely to be an extinct species, found, like the ichthyosaurus, only in the deposits of the past. The late M. Comte denies their right to be; and his followers say hard things of them with all that confidence of impunity which human nature is apt to shew toward the antagonist who is down and has no friends.

It is claimed that to physiology belongs the only possible science of mind—that all psychological and metaphysical methods are abortive. A materialism aggressive, vigilant and acute, is manifesting itself on all sides. In France it has many able representatives. In England and America it is by no means silent. In Italy, if we may believe Mazzini, it is the eternal ally of despotism, recognizing no higher formula than the necessary alternation of vicissitudes, and condemning humanity to tread perpetually the same circle. But it is from Germany, the land of philosophy, of Leibnitz and Kant, that now proceed the most contemptuous attacks on all speculative systems.

"The German philosophy," says Dr. Büchner, author of an atheistic manual of materialism, entitled *Matter and Force*, "now inspires a legitimate disgust in men both learned and illiterate. The days are gone by when pedantic jargon, metaphysical quackery, and intellectual legerdemain, enjoyed popularity."

According to Dr. Moleschott, the ablest leader of the Materialist school in Germany at the present time, the natural and positive sciences have superseded all philosophical systems. He proclaims a physiological materialism founded on experience. In a work entitled *The Circular Course of Life*, a fourth edition

of which was published in 1862, he maintains the hypothesis of an indefinite circulation of matter passing on unceasingly from the world of life to the world of death, and *vice versa*; and he exalts what he calls "the all-mightiness of the transmutations of matter." His central axiom is, "Without matter no force, and without force no matter." Thought, he tells us, is a movement of matter, and there is no thought without phosphorus—a consideration which surely ought to make us look with more respect henceforth on lucifer matches.

Another German writer, Lowenthal, goes beyond Moleschott, and reproaches him with being an eclectic Materialist, on account of his principle of the union of matter and force, whereas force is not an essential and primordial condition of matter, but only the result of aggregation; so that not only mind but force is the product of all-sufficient matter.

Mr. Carl Vogt, who unites the rhetorician with the scientist, can hardly keep his temper when he speaks of metaphysicians, and of the simpletons who still believe in such an exploded chimaera as a soul. He is the author of the following not wholly scientific formula: "Thought stands in the same relation to the brain as bile to the liver, or urine to the kidneys." This confounding of visible phenomena of matter with invisible phenomena of mind shows that Mr. Vogt does not have very clear notions on the subject of analogy.

"Physiology," he tells us, "decides definitely and categorically against individual immortality, as against any special existence of the soul."

Dogmatism like this is not suggestive of the earnestness of scientific conviction, but rather of the uneasiness of one who would cut off further discussion by calling the previous question. When the Materialist becomes assertive, sets up a limit, and says that beyond the line of his own knowledge there lies nothing more to be known, he must not complain if sincere though modest thinkers set him down as nothing more than a charlatan.

In England a work of considerable ability, *The Physiology and Pathology of the Mind*, by Henry Maudsley, M.D., has recently appeared. The author omits no opportunity of a fling at the metaphysicians. "The ambitious youth," he tells us, "goes through an attack of metaphysics as a child goes through an attack of measles." (A professional, but by no means an original, illustration.) "Metaphysics is practically obsolete." "After being in fashion for two thousand years, nothing has been established by the metaphysical method."

According to this writer, mind is not an entity, an independent source of power, but the most dependent of all the natural forces. Metaphysics, in postulating a soul, merely ab-

abstracts a quality or attribute from the concrete, and converts the abstraction into an entity. He tells us it is time that the "unholy barrier" between psychical and physical nature should be broken down.

Mr. Alexander Bain, a writer whose merits ought to make him more generally known in America, while he is more temperate than Dr. Maudsley on the subject of metaphysical inquiries, believes that mind enters, if not directly, at least indirectly, into the circle of correlated forces; but this is a belief not inconsistent with reverential conceptions of God and the immortality of the thinking principle.

The extreme upholders of an extreme orthodoxy, whether Catholic or Protestant, join with the Positivists and the Materialists in their raid upon the metaphysicians. The Ultramontanist party in France say, substantially, to the theistic philosophers: "Claiming, as you do, to be religious, you have no right to remain rationalistic; for reason outside of the Church becomes scepticism."

To this the philosophers reply: "In order to submit ourselves to authority, we must first be satisfied that it is a legitimate and necessary authority: we must reason, inasmuch as the very principle of the abdication of reason at the feet of authority implies a recognition of the supremacy of reason. Furthermore, the Church Universal itself has many times condemned in clear terms the proscription of the reason; and has declared that 'by the process of reason we may with certainty prove the existence of God, the spirituality of the soul, and the liberty of man—that faith is posterior to reason.'"

But the hardest blow that has been dealt at the metaphysicians in our times has been by metaphysicians themselves. According to Sir William Hamilton, the only use of philosophy is to teach us that there can be no such thing as philosophy; not to despair of it is a last infirmity of noble minds, but still an infirmity: like Ixion, we embrace a cloud for a divinity in thinking we have arrived at any satisfactory system. A learned ignorance is, therefore, the most difficult acquirement—perhaps, indeed, the consummation of knowledge.

"There is no difficulty in theology," says Sir William Hamilton, "which had not previously emerged in philosophy."

To which the obvious reply has been made that if it is a difficulty that cannot be surmounted, why attempt it in theology any more than in philosophy? Why not admit that true wisdom would then lie in shutting up our books and keeping quiet, as much on matters religious as on matters metaphysical?

Mr. Mansell, one of the most eloquent of the disciples of Hamilton, undertakes to rescue certain theological tenets

from the objections of reason, by contending that the reason is as incapable of conceiving God as it is of conceiving the Trinity or the Atonement. He finds as many difficulties in the hypothesis of incredulity as in that of faith—as many in natural as in dogmatic theology. But, under this view, his only legitimate course would be, not to try to establish beliefs by decrying ideas, but to take his faith out of the field of dialects altogether, and to claim for it exemption as something not to be reasoned about. A French critic, Charles de Remusat, has well exposed Mr. Mansell's inconsistency in this respect.

Those persons who would subordinate reason to faith may find comfort in conclusions like those of Mr. Mansell; but the Hamiltonian philosophy is a two-edged sword, apt to wound the wielder, inasmuch as it may be used as confidently and dexterously in the service of unbelief as of belief.

Mr. Herbert Spencer, who has many readers in the United States, and from whom great things are expected in philosophy, is sometimes claimed as a follower of Comte; but this he repudiates in the most distinct manner, and in doing it he rather under-estimates, we think, the influence of Comte in England. In his doctrine of theological nescience as the final result of religious inquiry, Mr. Spencer is in accord with Sir William Hamilton, and does not differ widely from the Positivist school.

Our experience Mr. Spencer regards as the sole origin of our knowledge. Inward and outward things he considers alike inscrutable in their ultimate genesis and nature. Insoluble mystery in all directions—in science as well as in philosophy. He acknowledges a real basis in human nature for the religious sentiment, but is of opinion that "Negation of absolute knowing contains more religion than all dogmatic theology."

There would seem to be an inconsistency in his doctrine of the relativity of all knowledge. Our knowledge, he tells us, is relative, and the relative has none of the characteristics of the absolute. But how can he maintain this, if, as he says, the absolute is utterly unknown and unknowable? How does he know, then, but that the absolute and the relative are in many respects alike?

Again, if Mr. Spencer claims to know one thing absolutely—this, namely, that the absolute is inaccessible to our knowledge—then his doctrine of nescience no longer has the universal axiomatic authority he assigns to it.

Mr. Spencer declares that the dispute between Spiritualists and Materialists is "a mere war of words," and that both parties are "equally absurd."

Many kingly heads in the realm of thought must be dis-crowned if this be unconditionally so. But the absurdity of the

disputants depends upon what they mean by their "words." We grant that they are absurd in disputing if they mean essentially the same thing—if they mean that the soul, call it spiritual or material, survives the dissolution of the visible body. But if the Materialist means annihilation where the Spiritualist means continuous life—if the Materialist means that this "sentient matter," as he chooses to call it (but which, through all the flux and transmutation of the particles of the body, has been the conscious individual, the *ego*, the sense of identity, the power which has said, *I did*, *I do* and *I will*) must perish for ever or dwindle into the life of a vegetable or a reptile, then we do not admit that the dispute is a mere war of words, and we think that the absurdity is Mr. Spencer's in so characterizing it.

The Spiritualist will not object to your giving the name of *matter* (ὕλη the stuff that things are made of) to what *he* calls *mind*. He will not even insist upon the incompatibility of the two in certain senses. You may make mind assume certain attributes of matter, or you may refine matter into a modification of mind, capable at once of thinking, of seeing and of being seen—of feeling and of being felt.

You may adopt, if you please, the language of that accomplished Pyrrhonist, Edmond Scherer, which we here translate: "Matter, in certain conditions, produces light and heat; yet in other conditions it feels, wishes and acts; in other conditions, finally, in the superior degree, it manifests itself as thought, it acquires consciousness, it arrives at the spiritual life."

This is certainly the least offensive form in which the Materialist theory can be presented; but it amounts merely to saying that in so far as matter becomes what we understand by spirit, it is no longer what we understand by matter.

You may call in the aid of Dr. Moleschott, if you please, who tells us that "the times are past when spirit was assumed to exist independently of matter."

Let us pause here a moment. What Moleschott seems to regard as an ancient assumption was, until the appearance of Des Cartes in philosophy, in 1637, wholly foreign to the prevailing mode of thought. It was Des Cartes who introduced so widely into philosophy and theology the notion of the essential heterogeneity of body and soul. The dogma of the immateriality of the soul, in the extent of its adoption, is eminently a modern "assumption." The ancient philosophers, for the most part, regarded spirit as something more subtle than the matter of our earthly bodies, but by no means incorporeal. Plato himself, while he makes his soul substance indivisible and not subject to change, does not deprive it, in other respects, of the ordinary properties of bodies. Of the Christian Fathers, hardly one of

any distinction, with the doubtful exception of Augustine, entertained the notion of the soul's immateriality. They looked upon spirit not as something amorphous and incorporeal, but as having a common substratum with matter—and as being a space-filling entity.\*

"Unprejudiced philosophy," says Moleschott, "is compelled to reject the idea of an individual immortality and of a personal continuance after death."

This is merely an indirect mode of insinuating that the philosophy of Dr. Moleschott is the only one that is not a philosophy of prejudice. But the conceit is a harmless one, and we let it pass. If, as he says, thinking be a purely material phenomenon, a mere movement of matter, then you must either regard the matter as *sentient*, thus admitting as much as the sagacious Spiritualist would care to have you admit for his purpose, or you must resort to a *petitio principii*, and assume the very point in dispute—this, namely, that the properties of matter, outside of man, suffice to explain the whole man, including the thinking principle.

This is what Moleschott practically does; and it is a saltatory and convenient though not a scientific mode of overcoming difficulties. He undertakes to establish between a physical and a mental fact a relation precisely similar to that which exists between two purely material facts.

But should there be no begging of the question, perhaps materialism will reply that mind is not the result of matter alone nor of motion alone, but of the union of the two. Have we any firmer footing here? If matter and motion are the sole authors of mind, then must they create it out of nothing, since neither of them had it, actually or potentially, already; and thus we must resort to the absurdity of investing them with a power which we do not accord to God himself.

"But why," asks the late Thomas Hope, "since God is the Author of matter as well as of mind, may He not have fraught matter itself with the attributes necessary to develope into mind?"

If you adopt this question, even putting the word Nature in the place of God, you abandon the whole ground of Materialism, and are driven to the admission that mind must come from mind, the finite from the Infinite intelligence. If Nature can do God's work, then Nature will be God, call it by what name you please.

The "absurdity" of the dispute between Materialists and

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\* The prevailing belief is expressed by Tertullian thus: "Nihil enim si non corpus. Omne quod est, corpus est sui generis; nihil est incorporale, nisi quod non est. Quis enim negabit Deum corpus esse, etsi Deus spiritus est? Spiritus enim corpus sui generis, suâ effigie."

Spiritualists would seem to depend, therefore, a good deal upon the meaning they attach to words. The language of Mr. Herbert Spencer is as follows:

"The Materialist and Spiritualist controversy is a mere war of words; the disputants being equally absurd—each believing he understands that which it is impossible for any man to understand. In all directions his investigations eventually bring him face to face with the unknowable; and he evermore clearly perceives it to be the unknowable."

But would it not be more "absurd" to dispute about the knowable than the unknowable? If a thing may be known as we know that two and two make four, what is there to dispute about? We should hardly be roused to dispute with the man who should deny that there is such an art as photography.

The Materialist may not understand what matter is in its essence, nor the Spiritualist what spirit is; but the one may reason (from imperfect and illusive analogies, we think) that since he cannot see or feel a departing soul, there is nothing in a man different from the matter he can see or test; while the other, the Spiritualist, may, from numerous facts, phenomena and intuitions, which he knows and feels to be true, conclude that the soul is not impaired by the dissolution of the earthly body, but is an entelechy, for which ever new bodies will, by a law of its nature, be ready as they are wanted.

To say that the Spiritualist, because he may not confound life with its finite modes of manifestation—because he may not regard the death of the visible body as the death of an invisible—is chargeable with the absurdity of believing that he understands that which it is impossible for any man to understand, is, in the first place, not an accurate assertion, any more than it would be to charge a like absurdity upon him because he believes that an oak comes from an acorn, he not understanding the how or why; and, in the second place, even if there *were* an apparent ground for the charge, it would be tantamount to an assumption, on the part of Mr. Spencer, that what is to him incomprehensible in regard to spirit cannot furnish a rational basis of belief to any other human being. It is as if a person deficient in an ear for music should declare that there is no such thing as tune; or, wanting the mathematical faculty, should pronounce certain astronomical calculations fallacious and impossible. In the very act of calling a thing incomprehensible, do we not assume a knowledge that is absolute so far as other minds are concerned? What if there should be a spiritual aptitude which, like the musical or the mathematical faculty, may be wholly undeveloped in some persons and active in others?

Mr. Spencer tells us that the sense of justice, which seems to be inherent in the minds of well-constituted persons in civilized

communities, is not known to the lowest savages; also, that there are certain æsthetic emotions common among ourselves that are hardly, in any degree, experienced by some inferior races. May it not be that there are similar inequalities among persons (otherwise nobly endowed) in the faculty of seeing or understanding spiritual facts? Though *I* may never have seen a spirit, is it altogether quite satisfactorily established beyond all question, even in these positive days, that Socrates, and Swedenborg, and the Seeress of Prevorst, and thousands of other gifted persons, were lunatics or impostors when they claimed to have had glimpses of a life beyond the present?

We of the civilized races, as Mr. Spencer will admit, know something of *justice*, although a savage might call it "the unknowable;" and we may, without "absurdity," contend for what we conceive to be *just*. But there are persons, besides Plato, who will tell Mr. Spencer that their belief in a future life is, like their sense of justice, an *à priori* conviction—that the two have for them an equally authentic foundation.

Mr. Spencer like others of his school, may repudiate the possibility of any such conviction; but if he will not sink the philosopher in the partizan, he will see that it is a breach of good manners, as well as of good reasoning, to stigmatize as "absurd" those thinkers who hold an opposite opinion to his own on a question which is as much an open one, philosophically considered, as when Socrates drank the hemlock; although it is a question on which a large and growing class have, in spite of the materialism of the day, convictions as entire and serene as those of Socrates himself.

For ourselves, we confess that we feel quite as secure in being "absurd" (if you will have it so) with Socrates and Plato and their successors of modern times in philosophy, as in being "nescient" with Mr. Herbert Spencer and his associates, respectable as they undoubtedly are.

Among the opposers of metaphysical inquiry, the followers of Comte seem to be the most active now. Comte, in banishing to the realm of chimera all considerations of God and a future life, provided a "substitute" for Christianity and theism in his "religion of humanity."

Diderot had made the remark that all the positive religions are mere heresies in respect to natural religion. Comte says, Let natural religion go with the rest! Since man unfortunately is a religious animal, and must have a religion of some sort, let them all make way for my "religion of humanity." And so the positive school, having suppressed God, offer as a substitute for man's adoration—man himself!

In regarding man as the summit of things, the Comteans,



and that division of the philosophical school of Hegel known as "the extreme left," seem to be in accord. Among the Germans the doctrine of immortality is ridiculed in gross terms by Feuerbach, the humanity-worshipper; while by Freidrich Richter the hope of a future life is denounced as "the ambitious craving of egoism." But Mr. Max Stirner goes a step beyond Feuerbach and Comte. He brands their religion of humanity as "a last superstition," and preaches *autolatry*, or self-adoration. "Every man his own God," is the conclusion at which he arrives; and in this he is rather more logical, we think, than either Comte or the extreme Hegelians.

The latter, through Michelet of Berlin, Dr. Strauss and others, maintain that God is personal only in man, and that the soul is immortal only in God; in other words, that neither is God personal nor the soul immortal.

Disdaining metaphysical subtleties like these, Comte proposes the worship of humanity. This he would symbolize in statuary by "a woman of thirty with a child in her arms," as representative of "the aggregate of co-operative beings endowed with nervous systems of three centres."

He gives the outline of what he calls a "systematic cultus," and, by way of introduction to the liturgy of this cultus, he offers for the religion of the future a "Positivist Calendar, or General System of Public Commemoration." In this calendar, every month is to be associated with the invocation of some man of "the first order," whether legislator, conqueror or artist—Moses, Cæsar, Shakspeare, &c. Every Saturday is to have for its patron a man of "the second order," such as Booddha, Augustine, Mozart; and finally, each day is to have a man of "the third order" for its presiding divinity, and among these Comte mentions the names of Anacreon and Rossini!

"It is thus," says the late Emile Saisset, "that M. Comte proposes to replace God. This grotesque pantheon, where Dr. Gall figures as a divinity of the second order, while Pascal and Voltaire are relegated to a place with divinities of the third order, in company with Miss Edgeworth and Mme. de Motteville—this laughable assortment of gods and goddesses, such is what the positive school offers us as what ought to displace the faith of a Bossuet and a Newton!"

Notwithstanding its decidedly comic phase, this "religion of humanity" has been formally inaugurated, and churches for its promulgation have been organized in Paris, London and New York. A French Comtean preacher lately rebuked his hearers for intolerance toward their poor benighted brethren who still grope in the darkness of belief. He said, "There are still many persons who find hope and comfort in a belief in a spiritual world;

*let us not be unduly severe upon them.*" Truly, in its unconsciousness of humour, and as showing that even positivism cannot crush out human nature, the admonition is deliciously droll.

In London a Mr. Congreve presides over a Comtean church, where services are held every Sunday, and where many distinguished persons, including Lord Houghton, Mr. Lewes and other literary gentlemen, frequently attend. To Mr. Henry Edger belongs, we believe, the distinction of officiating at the inauguration of the first Comtean church in the United States. On Sunday, April 5, 1868, there was a gathering at the great hall of the Conservatory of Music, on the Fifth Avenue in the city of New York, to hear this disciple expound the gospel according to Comte. He told his audience that, in endeavouring to state to them the fundamental doctrines of the Comtean philosophy, he had no reservation whatever to make in limitation of his own acceptance of them.

Fanciful and repulsive as Comte's "religion of humanity" may be to reverent theistic believers, it seems to have an attraction for a class of minds to which no one will deny moral elevation and superior ability. Mr. J. S. Mill has spoken some noble words for freedom, both personal and intellectual. With the true knightly spirit, he never shrinks from the utterance of an opinion because it may be unpopular. His views of a life after the present seem tinged with a Sadducean gloom. In the preface to his work on *Liberty*, referring to his departed wife, he speaks of "the great thoughts and noble feelings which are buried in her grave." The expression, we are told, is not an inadvertence, but the sober and mournful conviction of a powerful mind. Mr. Mill is not often betrayed into enthusiasm; and we rarely find in his writings any warmth of language when it is only of those systems of worship in which God and the invisible world are recognized that he speaks; but he becomes unusually animated when he refers to a religion emptied of all belief in Deity, in absolute goodness and in the immortality of the soul. Of the Comtean system he says:

"It has superabundantly shown the possibility of giving to the service of humanity, even without the aid of a belief in Providence, both the psychological power and the social efficacy of a religion; making it take hold of human life, and colour all thoughts, feeling and action, in a manner of which the greatest ascendancy ever exercised by any religion *may be but a type and a foretaste.*"

Is not Mr. Mill a trifle sanguine in this anticipation? Conceive of a sane man bowing at a shrine where Voltaire and Rossini are the saints! Think of summoning one's devotional sentiments to join in a chant to the author of *Candide*! What a substitute for Helen Maria Williams's grand theistic hymn—

"While thee I seek, protecting Power,"  
would be an invocation to Dr. Gall, the phrenologist; or to Miss

Edgeworth, the amiable novelist! In contrast to the commendatory strain of Mr. Mill, take the following from the French of Edgar Quinet, author of *Le Genie des Religions*, and not inferior to Mr. Mill either in philosophical culture or in practical devotion to all measures that can advance the freedom and well-being of mankind:

"They say to me, Well, then, worship Humanity. A curious fetich, truly! *I have seen it too close.* What! kneel before that which is on its knees before any triumphant force! Crawl before that beast crawling on its myriad feet! That is not *my* faith! What should *I* do with such a god? *Take me back to the ibises and necklaced serpents of the Nile!*"

Perhaps there is as much extravagance in the scorn of M. Quinet as in the rapt admiration of Mr. Mill. But when those sacred words, *religion, worship*—associated as they are in the reverent mind with all that is most profound and earnest in feeling and in thought—are so wrenched from the meaning which use has given them as to be applied to the sentiment which one might entertain toward beings like ourselves, frail, fallible and transitory, we believe that the impression of most men, not abnormal in their idiosyncrasies, will be one of aversion, and that they will sympathize with the language of Quinet rather than with that of Mill, and be ready to exclaim with the former, "What should *I* do with such a god?"

We can conceive that the man who has arrived at convictions inconsistent with a belief in God and spiritual realities may find, in efforts for the amelioration of human suffering a partial substitute for his deprivation. There is a law of compensation, a correlation of forces, in the moral world as well as in the physical, and right acting must lead in the end to right feeling, if not to right thinking. But to compare the attitude of mind induced by the contemplation of man, individually or collectively, with that mental state to which we rise when the finite craves the possibility of the Infinite, the weak feels the necessity of the Omnipotent, and the fallible of the Omniscient; when we have, or, if you prefer, *imagine* that we have, spiritual promptings, intimations, glimpses, suggesting better things than this life can offer, and which—

"Be they what they may,  
Are yet the fountain-light of all our day,  
Are yet a master-light of all our seeing"—

to compare, in brief, the hypothetical "worship of humanity" with the results of that overpowering instinct of adoration which the cultivated and awakened conscience experiences, and has in all ages experienced in its highest moods, at the conception of God, is to confound the paltry with the sublime—

the little theatrical interior, where clowns strut and jest under the blue and gilt ceiling, with the starry cope of the universe.

We all know what Mr. Mill will reply to such expressions as we have here used in speaking of a devotional frame of mind. He will say: "I confess my utter ignorance of all such *à priori* assumptions. To you they may be real; to me they are not real." And we, with equal reason, may retort: "When you tell us of the psychological power of a *religion of humanity*, you indulge in an assumption quite as open to objection as any *à priori* postulate whatever."\*

We have seen that in Germany the worship of humanity is ridiculed by the bolder Atheists as a last remnant of superstition, destined to be replaced by the worship of self:

"Now give the pulse full empire! Live the brute,  
Since as the brute we die!"

An anecdote, which may not be one of the freshest, has been told of a young Hegelian, who had found in Hegel ("where each his dogma finds") the philosophy of self-deification. A friend, calling on him one day, found him stretched on a sofa, apparently in a mood of seraphic contemplation. Slapping him on the shoulder, the friend asked, "What's the matter?" To which the absorbed youth replied: "Hush! don't be profane! I'm adoring myself."

That extraordinary compound of the visionary and the dispeller of visions, Auguste Comte, to whose teachings much of the anti-metaphysical movement of the present time may be traced, was born in Montpellier, France, in 1795, and died in Paris in 1857. Educated at the Polytechnic School, he became one of the disciples of Saint-Simon, and, on the death of that remarkable social reformer, founded a school of his own. In 1827 he became deranged in mind, and, in a fit of insanity threw himself into the Seine, from which he was rescued by one of the king's guard.

We are told by M. Guizot that Comte, though single-minded and honest, was prodigiously vain; that whoever did not accept his doctrine was, in his estimation, either a retrogradist full of prejudices, or an ignoramus without scientific education, or an interested and jealous opponent; that whoever lent himself to his views must become his philosophical serf, his conquest and property, or else be treated as a rebel and a deserter.

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\* A witty writer remarks that the attempt to form a religion and brotherhood of unbelief reminds him of the logic of the Irishman, who, meeting a fellow-countryman, asked, "Is your name Patrick?" "No." "Were you born in Killarney?" "No." "Have you a mole under your left ear?" "No." "Oh, then come to my arms, my long-lost brother!"

Laughed at during his lifetime as an egotist and a bore, even by many who recognized his great abilities, Comte has become a wonderful intellectual force since his death. We see his influence in all the recent works on the phenomena of mind. Mr. Spencer disclaims its operation, but there is growing testimony to the fact.

The great object of Comte in his system is simplification. He would simplify all things; and he would do this by eliminating what he regards as superfluities and impertinences. This world, so complex and so various, and these elements of mystery, so manifold, both in the outward world and in the human soul, do not disturb or mystify this intrepid thinker. He tells us that the solar system is very badly arranged—"très mal établi"—and that it might, in many respects, be improved.

Theology and metaphysics he regards as two successive stages of nescience, unavoidable as preludes to all science. Psychology is the last phase of theology. We can know nothing but *phenomena*, their co-existence and successions; and the test of our knowledge is prevision. By *phenomena* must be understood objects of perception, to the exclusion of psychological change, reputed to be self-known. The idea of *causality*, efficient or final, is an illusion which should be expelled from philosophy. The *sciences* arrange themselves logically in a certain series, according to the growing complexity of their phenomena; and their historical agrees with their logical order.

The secret which Comte has discovered, and the revelation of which is to simplify the great world-problem, and set every mind at rest, is thus stated by the late Emile Saisset, from whom we translate:—

The human race, it is true, adore God; and the philosophy which accepts this holy faith has been consecrated by the genius of Newton and of Leibnitz. No matter. Monsieur Comte denies *in toto* the authority of the human race and of genius. In pursuit of simplicity he suppresses God. Henceforth no more absolute ideas in science—nothing but relative ideas: no more metaphysics, ontology, theology! There is no science but that of nature. *Simplification first.*

Nature comprehends two orders of things; physical beings or matter—moral beings or spirit. Let us suppress spirit, and keep only matter. No more phenomena of conscience; no more psychology; no more ideology; nothing but the mathematical and physical sciences. *Simplification second.*

We are drawing nearer to unity, but we are not quite there yet. The physical world has virtually two classes of elements: the one comprehended by the senses, and known as *phenomena*; the other, escaping the grasp of the senses, and known as space and time, matter in itself, the essence of bodies, the *causes* of phenomena. Let us suppress all this second class. There will then remain only certain visible, palpable phenomena, and certain laws which will merely be these phenomena generalized.

What admirable unity! What homogeneity hitherto unknown in the sciences, in their method, in their results! The *beau idéal* of simplification is attained. And who will complain that this incomparable simplicity has been

too dearly purchased? What has it in fact cost? Only these three things—God, spirit, liberty.\*

The ablest expounder of positivism in France at the present time is M. Littré. Master of a clear, succinct style, thoroughly devoted to the cause he has at heart, he has done much, by his earnestness and ability, to commend the doctrine to the attention of cultivated people. He says:—

Metaphysics has for its object the search of causes, first and final; and the inanity of its labours is shown in the result. Here, for some twenty-five centuries, the best intellects, whom the rudimentary state of the positive sciences did not permit to see the insolubility of the problem, and who had only this way open for high speculations, have been exercising their powers in the study of causes, first and final. After so many efforts, what do we know of these causes? Nothing, absolutely nothing. *And that it must always be so is apparent.* The human reason has no power to learn how things are, except by an *à posteriori* process; and the first origins and final terminations are, as they were at the commencement (if there ever was a commencement), and will be to the end (if there ever is to be an end), inaccessible to human experience.

Should there seem to be a little of the pontifical tone in this enunciation by M. Littré, let it be remembered that he is but following in the footsteps of his master, Comte, who played the pontiff during the latter part of his life in a manner to make even some of his most devoted disciples restive.

How does M. Littré know that the sequence of phenomena must always be what it *has* been? That no new light can ever be thrown on the problem of causation? That what always *has* been *must* be? He will probably tell us that by a law of his intellect he is compelled to believe so. But is his own experience the measure of truth? How does he know that he has arrived at a right interpretation of the law of his intellect; or that, if he has, his intellect, even under the operation of its law, points to absolute truth? He bases his whole argument on an hypothesis in which he makes large demands on our credulity, the hypothesis, namely, that the future must be always like the past.

In tracing back the links of experience, M. Littré is arrested by certain primordial and inexplicable facts, to which he gives the name of *laws*. Science, he tells us, can go no further. Hence he concludes that the universe has its cause in itself, rather than outside of itself. Is he justified in this conclusion by observation, by experience? Not at all! The fact that a cause is inexplicable is no argument against causation. Here then is another hypothesis which this foe to all chimeras would have us accept, in order to proceed with him in excluding God from the universe!

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\* Among the writings of the French theistic philosophers, there are few so worthy of translation as those of Saisset. Of English works the best exposition of pure theism is that of Professor Francis W. Newman, in his *Theism, Doctrinal and Practical* (Boston: Adams and Co.,) a work of rare power and compression.

In claiming certainty for the outer world precisely because it is *foreign to us*, and ridiculing as worthless the study of all mental states, precisely because they are *our own*, positivism merely puts on one of the cast-off robes of the metaphysics it denounces, and passes into simple idealism. Comte tells you that in order to *observe*, first your intellect must pause from activity. "Yet it is this very activity that you want to observe. Hence, if you cannot effect the pause, you cannot observe: if you do effect it, there is nothing to observe; and the results of such a method are in proportion to the absurdity."

All this was better said long before it was proclaimed by Comte. The obvious and sufficient reply to it is, that we are just as certain of inward facts as we are of outward—of the *me* as of the *not me*. The ultimate test of truth is not an alembic or an air-pump.

It is against the Spiritualist philosophy of France, and the simple theism it involves that the Comtean school is now waging its most active war. We have before us a work of recent date, entitled *Materialisme et Spiritualisme*, by Alph. Leblais. It is dedicated to M. Littré, and contains an introduction from his pen, to which the passage we have already quoted from him belongs. M. Leblais appears to be an enthusiastic follower of Comte, and says:—

It is Spiritualism which has had its way hitherto in human affairs. Catholicism is nothing but Platonism passed into a governing institution. Spiritualism is still dominant in the periodical and non-periodical press. It necessarily carries with it not only those who get their living by it, but the masses; for it flatters human nature, and rocks it with illusions the most seductive.

And, in the estimation of M. Leblais, what are these illusions? Only faith in God and the immortality of the soul. According to this writer, it is to the feminine temperament that these seductive illusions are especially dear. "Woman," he tells us, in a quotation he adopts, "is an animal essentially spiritualistic; man is a materialistic animal. This is owing to the *comparative quantity of gray and white matter contained in their brains!*"

Hardy and virile characters, like Mr. Gradgrind and M. Leblais, who have plenty of "gray matter" in their brains, will put up with no nonsense, no seductive illusions. They want facts—"Facts, sir, facts!" And so they naturally become Positivists, and join the Comtean church.

There is one interesting point on which Comteism withholds its oracles. The curious may inquire: If Humanity (or the aggregate of human beings, past and present) is to be the god of this little planet of ours, what shall we regard as the God of the universe? Though Comte does not appear to have anticipated

this question, we can easily imagine, from his criticisms on the solar system, what would be his answer. He would tell us that the God of the universe might have avoided some awkward mistakes if, before disturbing chaos, He had consulted the author of the *Positive Philosophy*.

The pith of the objections of the Comteans to the metaphysical method is, that outside of experience there can be nothing serious or real. They admit the data of the senses, but all primary truths, anterior and superior to experience, all innate principles of the human reason, and all notions drawn from those principles, and relating to an invisible world and a soul outliving the material body, they summarily reject.

To this the Spiritualist philosophers reply that the principles of causation and of justice are not the creations of experience. If you tell them, as Mr. Spencer does, that there are brutal savages, as well as exceptional beings in civilized society, in whose minds these principles are wanting or undeveloped, the reply is, that it is not among dwarfed and exceptional natures that we are bound to select our examples. To the man of average intelligence the rule applies. Certain principles, not founded on experience, constrain and move him. Principles founded on experience would assume the characteristics of experience and shift with the current of events. The value of a principle so founded would be simply that of an induction. There would be occasion every day to fear that some progress in science or in human affairs might transform or annihilate justice. Is that reconcilable with men's notion of justice?

The argument, a mere outline of which we have sketched, is ably carried out by Jules Simon, in the preface to the latest edition of his *La Religion Naturelle*. He says:—

Is there any one to whom the principle of causality is doubtful, and dependent on the number of experiences? In philosophy, in the experimental sciences, in life, what is there that we can regard as fixed and proved, unless the principle of causality is above all doubt? Of all the realities most real, of all the evidences most evident, this, at least, is real and evident—namely, that all men, without restriction or reserved, believe in the principle of causality, in the principle of justice, and that they believe in them invincibly, by a necessity of their nature.

Not only do they believe in, but they would believe in nothing else, did they not believe in these. They would not reason, speak or think. They think: therefore is there something fixed and immovable in their minds. They speak: therefore is there in all minds certain principles anterior to all communication by words. They reason: therefore do they have a point of support for the reasoning faculty. This truth admits of no more doubt for an infant than for a Des Cartes; and those who affect to doubt it, either to magnify revelation, or to reduce the human mind to the data of sense and of experience, do not see clearly to the bottom of their doctrine. Their doubt is but levity or despair. They argue against us, and would prove their point by the reason they ignore. But what is it to *prove*, if not to believe in a principle, and to believe that this principle being *naturally* given, they can, from it, scientifically discover another?



Oh, ye denouncers of chimeras and sworn foes to metaphysics! there is one thing more difficult than to believe, and that is to *doubt* absolutely. You employ a dogmatism to combat another dogmatism. You deny movement, but you march. You contest our right to have principles, but you avail yourselves of principles\* in contesting. You reproach us with meeting you with words, and with not being *positive*; but the first of your pretensions is to say that the absolute is the sum of all contingents; and in your passion for destroying metaphysics, you brandish the essential axioms of all mathematics!

It is rare that we meet with anything in philosophical discussion more eloquent than this. With M. Simon's vindication of metaphysics and psychology against the assaults of the Positivists, we might safely leave the subject at present; although we have hardly entered upon the threshold of a theme which, like all great ideas, expands into infinity as we advance.

We do not overlook the services which the processes of materialism have rendered to science, nor would we veil the mischiefs that have sprung from an unregulated belief in the supernatural, from anthropomorphic conceptions of Deity, and from abasing the reason before spiritual authority, supposed or real.

There are times when a sceptical revolt may, under Providence, be necessary to the progress of the sciences and of the physical welfare of mankind; for a too exclusive attention to the supernatural, in unduly belittling the affairs of this life, may be an oppression and an incubus to the intellect and the heart of an age. An honest materialism might have checked the horrors of the Inquisition in Spain, or prevented the massacre of the Huguenots in France. It is to an exaggerated or perverted supernaturalism that many of the most barbarous crimes of communities and of individuals may be traced.

But, on the other hand, it is to a coarse, self-sufficient materialism, shutting its eyes to all spiritual possibilities, that most of the meannesses of men, not chargeable to natural disposition, may be attributed. Give a man a thorough and enlightened conviction of his immortal destiny, and free him at the same time from the pressure of an irrational supernaturalism, and, unless he has some traits incompatible with moral sanity, he will be solicitous to form in this stage of being the mental habits and affections which he believes he will carry into the next.

The contest of the Materialist is a hopeless one, for it has

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\* To illustrate this, M. Simon might have quoted from Comte the following remark: "The phenomena of life are known *by immediate consciousness*. (*Phil. Pos.*, vol. ii., p. 648; vol. iii., p. 8.) And yet Comte affects to repudiate all *a priori* assumptions, all metaphysical processes, all reflective knowledge! Our attention was first called to this curious contradiction in Comte by Mr. James Martineau.

human nature itself for an antagonist. But the tendency of the times is not from the dangers that result from devotion to the supernatural (which may be, after all, but the natural misinterpreted). Science has relieved us from all ghostly terrors; and even spirits are, by a large class of the community, believed to come and go, and to move ponderable articles, without exciting so much alarm as might be caused by a burglar in the flesh.

Still, it cannot be disguised that, outside of the ranks of the scientific Spiritualists, the present drift is toward a materialism barren in all hope of a future life. In the great anti-metaphysical warfare which has been begun, it is not every devout Christian champion who repudiates the alliance of philosophy in repelling assaults aimed at the very foundations of all spiritual belief. Ernest Naville of Geneva, editor of the works of Main de Biran, and author of *Lectures on Modern Atheism*, is what would be called in the United States an "evangelical believer." He holds to the great doctrines of the fall and ruin of man by nature, the necessity of divine agency in his recovery, the atonement, and the eternal condemnation of the unregenerate. This writer remarks:—

If you think the most important of the discussions of our day to be that between natural and revealed religion, between deism and the Gospel, you have not well discerned the signs of the times. The fundamental discussion is now between men who believe in God, in the soul and in truth, and men, who, denying truth, deny at the same time the soul and God. \* \* \* The great question of the day is to know whether our desire of truth is a chimera—whether our effort to reach the divine world is a spring into the empty void.

A spring into the empty void! That is what our efforts to make a belief in God acceptable to the reason result in, if we may adopt the conclusion of Messrs. Hamilton, Mansell and Spencer. You must put up with religious "nescience," or else, without troubling your thinking powers in the matter, you must summon a blind faith, and compel reason to abdicate at the feet of some one of the various forms of "revealed religion."

Dismissing all sectarian prejudice, and fully recognizing the gravity of the crisis, M. Naville gives utterance to expressions which have in them almost a sound of welcome to all theistic believers who will make common cause with Christians everywhere in defence of fundamental truths. "The unbridled audacity," he says, "of those who deny these truths is bringing ancient adversaries, for a moment at least, to fight beneath the same flag. What they would rob us of is not merely this or that article of a definite creed, but all faith whatever in Divine Providence, every hope which goes beyond the tomb, every look directed toward a world superior to our present destinies."

In another place he says: "When the question relates to

God, to the Universal Cause, we find ourselves at the common root of religion and philosophy, and distinctions which exist elsewhere disappear."

This writer is one of the few faithful watchmen on the tower who are not blind to the signs in the world of thought. While others are heedlessly contending about this or that interpretation of Scripture, about Ritualism and anti-Ritualism, about Bishop Colenso and Bishop Wilberforce, there are indications of a contest coming when it will require the efforts of all believing men—whether Jews or Gentiles, whether formal adherents of some Christian sect or simple believers in God and the moral law—to save the rising intelligence of the age from a blank negation, or a still more fatal indifference, under the excuse conveyed in the conveniently coined phrase of "theological nescience."

In the approaching struggle, we may be sure that there will be room among the foremost defenders of divine and spiritual truth, for those who have explored the great field of metaphysical inquiry, undeterred by what they hear of its barren and delusive character; who have studied the meditations of Plato, and Des Cartes, and Locke, and Newton, and Leibnitz, and Spinoza, and Kant, and Jacobi, and Cousin, and Hegel, and many more, their peers or their disciples, and not turned from them as the authors of so much obsolete rubbish.

So long as there exists in the human mind a consciousness which prompts the utterance of such expressions as "I will" and "I ought"—so long as there are affections in our nature which suggest the hope of a re-union with the loved and lost—so long as there are mysteries in life and in the soul which lead our thoughts to seek repose and light in the idea of God\*—so long is the period not yet arrived when there will be "no more metaphysics."

"A single aspiration of the soul," says Hemsterhuis, "toward the better, the future, and the perfect, is a demonstration, more than geometrical, of divinity."

And it is here, on the idea of God, not as presented in theological history and in authoritative creed, but as reached by the intuitional and logical faculties of man, that the great battle between Spiritualism and Materialism, belief and unbelief, must be fought.

When we consider that natural science, at every step it takes in advance, reveals to us facts which intimate more and more distinctly that the physical itself may be but a stage or condition of the metaphysical; that even in "the stuff that

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\* "Console-toi, tu ne me chercherais pas si tu ne m'avais trouvé."—*Pensées de Pascal.*

things are made of," in *matter* itself, there are depths of mystery which may make us doubt whether, in the ordinary sense of the word, matter can be said to exist—whether, in its last analysis, it may not be a gradation of spirit, or resolvable, as Faraday thought, into *points of force*—we need feel little apprehension as to the result in any philosophical or scientific encounter between the opposing schools.

Chemistry tells us that the diamond, which to our senses is inert, ponderable matter, can be volatilized in the fire of the burning mirror, so as to develop neither smoke nor cinders. On the other hand, fire, essentially volatile, can be condensed, in the calcination of metal, so as to become ponderable. From these facts De Montlosier deduces the interesting conclusion that all the bodies of the universe might be volatilized and made to disappear in those spaces which our ignorance calls *the void*; and that, in its turn, what we call *the void* might be condensed, so that the number of the celestial bodies might be multiplied a hundredfold; and, through all this, the universe would not have changed in its nature and essence, though it would be changed in its appearance!

In facts like these there is matter for meditation which it would be well for the Positivists and the Materialists to ponder well before they enter upon the task of trying to exclude from the universe, and from the heart of man, the great ideas of God and the immortal life, and of the invisible world of substance and of cause.

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### SIGNOR DAMIANI'S EXPERIENCES.

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SIGNOR DAMIANI has addressed a letter "to the Committee of the Dialectical Society now sitting to investigate the Phenomena attributed to Spiritual Agency," in compliance with their desire that he would send them his experiences in writing. As these experiences are of great interest and value we give the principal portion of Signor Damiani's letter. After administering a well-merited reproof to the press which had misreported his evidence before the Committee, June 22nd, as they have misreported the evidence of Mr. Varley, Mr. Shorter, and other witnesses (though the Committee are not responsible for the newspaper reporters), Signor Damiani proceeds:—

"I am, comparatively, a novice in Spiritualism, having been engaged, altogether, only four years in the investigation of its

phenomena and the study of its literature. I am not a medium, nor have I sought to be developed into one; but I have come in contact with more than one hundred of that class (of whom only three were professional, or paid mediums), and have assisted at more than two hundred *séances* in England, France, and Italy. I am personally acquainted with many of the leading Spiritualists of Europe, of whom I here make bold to say that, as a class, they are certainly not inferior in intellectual calibre to any other body of scientists whom I have yet been privileged to encounter. Amongst the many phenomena which I might lay before you, I will content myself with the relation of a few only, as being sufficient to effectually dispose of all the theories of 'unconscious cerebration,' 'mental aberration,' 'collective delusion,' and other woeful epidemics, propounded by the advanced philosophers of the day in order to account for, and explain away, matters which even *they* admit to be somewhat abnormal in their nature.

"Now for facts. In the spring of 1865, I was induced by a friend to attend my first *séance*. This took place at No. 13, Victoria Place, Clifton, the medium being Mrs. Marshall. I had been, up to that moment, an utter sceptic in spiritual matters; full of positivism, I conceived man to be but a very acute monkey (*simia gigantis stupenda*, to be scientific), and recognised in life only a brief and somewhat unsatisfactory farce. I was, however, at the same time open to conviction,—which, perhaps, was foolish in me. I found assembled at this *séance* some forty gentlemen, lawyers, physicians, clergymen, and journalists, besides a fair sprinkling of ladies. A medical man, well known in the neighbourhood of Bristol, Dr. Davy, of Norwood, filled the chair. At first, I refused to sit at the large table whereat the manifestations were to take place, for being then what I have now ceased to be, an unqualified believer in the candour and truthfulness of the newspaper press, I made up my mind (certain journalistic comments being fresh in my recollection) to keep a sharp look-out upon the medium's movements.

"I was thus occupied (*intentaque ora tenebat*) when sounds, altogether unlike anything in my experience, were distinctly heard by me to proceed from the ceiling, some four yards as I should judge, above the medium. These sounds, travelling down the wall, along the floor, and up the claws and pillar of the large round table, came resounding in its very centre. This ought to have convinced me at once that the medium's toes, at least, had nothing to do with the phenomenon; but prejudiced incredulity is so strong a cuirass against the sword of truth, that I remained still watching the feet of the medium

under the table, as a cat does its prey. The chairman was the first to commence conversation with our (supposed) spiritual visitors. Shortly afterwards it came to my turn to talk with the spirits. 'Who is there?' 'Sister,' was rapped out in reply. 'What sister?' 'Marietta.' 'Don't know you; that is not a family name;—are you not mistaken?' 'No; I am your sister.' This was too much: I left the table in disgust. Still, those knocks proceeding from the ceiling had puzzled me, and excited my curiosity; therefore, when the company dispersed I remained behind, to discover, if I could, the *modus operandi*. I invited myself (the assurance of sceptics is proverbial) to take tea with Mrs. Marshall and her hostess, after which I begged to have a private *séance*. 'Now I shall catch you,' I thought. Sure enough the raps came again, distinct and sonorous as before. 'Who are you?' 'Marietta.' 'Again! why does not a sister whom I can remember come?' 'I will bring one;' and the raps were now heard to recede, becoming faint and fainter until lost in the distance. In a few seconds a *double knock*, like the trot of a horse was heard approaching, striking the ceiling, the floor, and lastly the table. 'Who is there?' 'Your sister Antonietta.' 'That is a good guess,' thought I. 'Where did you pass away?' 'Chieti.' 'When?' 34 loud distinct raps succeeded. Strange, my sister so named had certainly died at Chieti just 34 years before. 'How many brothers and sisters had you then? Can you give me their names? Five names (the real ones) all correctly spelt in Italian were given. Numerous other tests produced equally remarkable results. I then felt I was in the presence of my sister.

" 'If that is not in truth my sister,' I thought, 'then there exists in nature something more wondrous and mysterious even than the soul and its immortality.' What had taken place at this, my first *séance* produced such an effect upon my mind that I determined to continue the investigation until I could come finally to a rational conclusion upon the subject. During the fortnight of Mrs. Marshall's stay in Clifton, I frequented the *séances* daily, and on an average for four hours a day. Spirit after spirit I evoked, who one and all established their identity through the most searching tests. Having been thus uniformly successful, I felt somewhat perplexed about Marietta. Had I been mystified in her case, and in hers alone? Finally, I wrote to my mother, then living in Sicily, inquiring whether, among the nine children she had borne and buried, there had been one named Marietta. By return of post, my brother, Joseph Damiani, architect, now residing at Palermo, wrote as follows:—'In reply to your inquiry, mother wishes me to tell you that on October 2nd, 1821, she gave birth, at the town of Messina, to a female

child, who came into the world in so weakly a condition that the midwife, using her prerogative in such emergencies, gave her baptism. Six hours after birth the child died, when the midwife disclosed the fact of her having baptised the infant under the name of Maria (the endearing diminutive of which is Marietta). The birth and death of this sister I have verified by reference to the family register.' You must admit, gentlemen, that in the above case 'unconscious cerebration' has not a leg to stand upon.

"To proceed with my testimony. I have been present at *séances* when a sheet of blank paper and a pencil have been placed under the table, and a few seconds afterwards, these being picked up, sentences have been found written on the paper. How do I know that it was not the medium's toes did this, you may ask. Well, I can only reply that in such case the medium must indeed have possessed most extraordinary toes.

"Whilst in Sicily, quite recently, a most telling poem, two hundred lines long, in the Sicilian dialect, besides communications in German, French, Latin, and English, have been received in my presence, the medium in this case being a singularly illiterate person of the artisan class.

"I have met in Clifton with a boy medium, between 10 and 11 years of age, who would write long essays on spiritual philosophy, the matter and manner of these essays being such as would have been accepted from any accomplished writer of mature age who was conversant with the subject. I took the well-known Alessandro Gavazzi to a *séance* with this youthful medium. The acute polemist put various abstruse metaphysical and theological questions to the medium, or rather to the medium's controlling spirit, and received replies so deep and learned as to convince him that it was no mere case of 'clever boy.' This young medium—whose writings now extant would fill a dozen volumes—exhibited a different handwriting for every controlling spirit by whom he was directed, and wrote occasionally in several of the dead languages.

"I know another medium aged 15, also resident at Clifton, who, when under spirit influence, will give answers written in rhyme, so good, both as to matter and style, as to preclude any possible question in the minds of those who know him as to their being his own unassisted composition.

"While in Paris a few weeks ago, I was at several *séances* with the 'healing medium,' Jacob, the ex-Zouave. I have seen patients who entered the room upon crutches, walk out of it perfectly cured. On touching his patients, Jacob invariably enumerates (to their great amazement) all the drugs they have

been taking. '*Vous vous êtes fait empoisonner avec de l'opium et de l'aconite, et vous vous êtes nourri de porc salé et de viandes saignantes,*' I heard him say on one occasion. '*Oui, monsieur,*' the sufferer ejaculated. '*Taisez vous, je n'ai pas besoin que vous me le dites, puisque je le sens,*'\* was the curt rejoinder.

"When present at *séances*, I have heard instruments sounding and playing in good time and with correct enharmonic accompaniments, whilst, to my own knowledge, no one in the room, with the exception of myself, knew anything about music, and it certainly was not *I* that played on these occasions.

"I have heard noises, as of sledge-hammers on the walls of a private house in Clifton, making the whole building shake to its foundations. The sound of footsteps moving about from one part of the room to another, I have repeatedly heard in open daylight, upon occasions when no one was present in the room with me, except a seated medium. I have seen a heavy table rise bodily from the floor when only the medium's fingers and my own were resting lightly on it, and rising in such a manner and to such a height, as to render *toe-leverage* a matter of physical impossibility. I have often, when seated, been shifted together with the chair on which I have been sitting, a foot or more from the table during a *séance*.

"I have seen a lady raised in her chair at least a clear foot from the ground, and sustained in that position for several seconds, whilst no hands were touching her or her chair—the medium, moreover, being a considerable distance off.

"I have frequently held spirit-hands (at all events, hands not attached to any corresponding body) in my grasp. The touch of these hands differed so much from that of human hands, that I can bring nothing like analogy or comparison to bear upon it. They were not so warm as human hands, and ordinarily (though not invariably) were softer in texture. Their contact has generally sent a thrill through my frame, somewhat resembling a slight electric shock. These hands would melt away and dissolve in mine. I have often *seen* the hands. They are generally beautiful in form, with tapering fingers, such as those Canova gives to his ideal nymphs and goddesses. Sometimes they present a whitish and opaque appearance, at other times I have seen them pink and transparent.

"I have assisted at several *séances* with the Davenport Brothers—those men of all living (except, Daniel D. Home) the best abused. On their last visit to England in 1868, I happened to be selected as one of the persons who were to tie

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\* "You have allowed yourself to be poisoned with opium and aconite, and you have been feeding on salt pork and meat underdone,"—"Yes, sir." "Do not speak; I do not want you to tell me, since I *feel* it."



them to their seats in that well-known cabinet of theirs. Immediately after they were thus secured, five pink transparent hands appeared ranged perpendicularly behind the door. Subsequently I placed my hand in the small window of the cabinet, when I felt each of my five digits tightly grasped by a distinct hand, and while my own was thus held down, five or six other hands protruded from the hole above my wrist. On withdrawing my hand from the aperture, an arm came out therefrom—an arm of such enormous proportions that, had it been composed of flesh and bone, it would, I verily believe, have turned the scale (being weighed) against the whole corporeal substance of the smaller Davenport. At the *séance* I have just mentioned, there were present, amongst others, Mr. Goolden Perrin, of Westmoreland Place, Camberwell, Mr. Robert Cooper, of the Terrace, Eastbourne, Sussex, also a celebrated mesmeric doctor, whose name has, for the moment, escaped my recollection.

"I have assisted at *séances* where, the windows being closed, and the doors locked, *fresh* flowers have been showered on the company just previously to their departure. It was at Baron Guldenstubbe's in London, in the year 1867, that I first remember having witnessed this. The flowers would have filled a large basket, and the fact of their being *perfectly fresh* and besprinkled with dew—the medium, Mrs. Guppy (*née* Nicholl), having been with us continuously for at least two hours before the *séance* commenced—in itself, and apart from the lady's great respectability, precludes any, the faintest, suspicion of 'crinoline mystification,' or sleight of hand. I must not omit mentioning that, on examining the flowers, some of which still remain in my possession, we perceived that the ends of the stems presented a blackened and burnt appearance. On our asking the invisible intelligences the reason of this, we were told that electricity had been the potent 'nipper' employed.

"In the year 1866, at a 'dark *séance*' held at the Spiritual Athenæum in London, I distinctly saw Miss Nicholl raised on her chair from the ground by some unseen agency, and placed on the table round which I and many others were sitting. A gap in a folding door, through which the light flickered, enabled me from where I sat to distinctly see her carried aloft through the air with extreme swiftness.

"Another interesting series of phenomena coming under my personal observation has been the 'voice *séances*,' whereat I have heard and conversed with spirit-voices. Having attended at several of these *séances* with different mediums, and in the presence of numerous investigators, I have for hours together conversed with voices which could not on either of these occasions have proceeded from any living person in the room wherein, for

the time being, we were assembled. The voices vary in pitch, from the firm, vigorous, declamatory tone of the stage to a faint whisper. How could I be certain, it may be asked, that this was not ventriloquism—I will give my reasons for the faith that is in me in this behalf *seriatim*:—

“1st.—Because three of these voice-mediums are personal acquaintances of my own, move in respectable society, and running imminent risk of detection, would have all to lose and nothing to gain by the stupid trick of imitating ‘sperrits.’

“2ndly.—Because the voices that have greeted me at the houses of these unpaid mediums have also subsequently conversed with me at private *séances* at Mrs. Marshall’s, and have there exhibited the same peculiarities as to tone, expression, pitch, volume, and pronunciation, as upon the former occasions.

“3rdly.—Because these voices have conversed with me upon matters known to me alone, and of a nature so personal and private that I am perfectly certain that no one present at any of the *séances* except myself could by any possibility have been cognisant of them.

“4thly.—Because the voices have often foretold events about to happen, which events have invariably come to pass.

“These dark *séances* of which I have spoken generally ended with the appearances of blue or red lights over the spectators’ heads, and with the copious sprinkling of delicious perfumes. On me, even on me, who now speak, descended violet odours.

“A few more facts, and I have done. On Wednesday, June 23rd, 1869, having accidentally met with Mr. Gardener, he proposed introducing me to a trance-medium, Mr. F. Hearn, of Great Coram Street, Russell Square. I assenting, we went there together, and having been left alone with the medium, I had a *tête-à-tête séance* with him. Mr. Hearn fell into a trance, and whilst in this state five voices spoke through him to me. Three of these were unknown to me, but the other two I recognised immediately, as if they had spoken to me in the flesh. One of them was the voice of the dearest friend and relation I ever possessed. She spoke to me of family matters, so intimate and, I may say, sacred in their character, that the supposition that Mr. Hearn (a man I had never even seen before), or anybody else, could by any possibility have known of them, would be an insult to my common sense to entertain for one moment. On awakening from the trance, Mr. Hearn complained of great pain in his back, and observed that the spirit who had just quitted him must have so suffered during life. This was perfectly true; the dear friend to whom (I am firmly assured) I had even then been speaking, did, from the cradle to the grave,

suffer acute pain in the three upper vertebræ of her spinal column.

"I know a lady in Bristol who was so short-sighted that, even with powerful glasses, she had great difficulty in reading the largest print. Four years ago, she (having then developed into a writing medium) was impelled, as she says, by her mother's spirit to write to this effect, 'Discard spectacles, have faith, and you will soon recover your sight.' She did so, and the effect followed almost immediately. I have seen her frequently since engaged, by candle light, in delicate and minute embroidery. This same lady had her front upper teeth nearly 45 degrees out of the perpendicular. In the course of a few days after, receiving a message purporting to come from the same spirit, her teeth became perfectly straight, without the intervention of a dentist. I have begged this lady to allow me to use her name in connection with these facts, but she has objected, assigning as a reason the ridiculous nature of the last phenomenon. I will not be so ungallant as to disobey her, but I will give the names of two or three gentlemen who are, like myself, personally cognisant of the facts I have above narrated:—I will mention Messrs. Watson, Blackwell, and John Beattie, all of Bristol or Clifton.

"These facts are only a handful compared with those which I have experienced during four years of persistent investigation. After such evidence brought home to me in so extraordinary a manner, I should deserve to fall from man's estate and dwindle into '*simia gigantis formosa*, nay, into '*gorilla liliputiana stupidissima*,' if I still allowed a doubt to enter my mind as to the causes producing these effects. With regard to the philosophy of Spiritualism—a new philosophy, indeed, but boasting a vast polyglot literature, which for profundity and variety of thought has no parallel—I would refer the committee to the list of books supplied to them by Mr. William Howitt.

"I would earnestly entreat of the committee to become as much as possible acquainted with the philosophy of Spiritualism, before compiling and publishing their report. As to those fatally clever men who, approaching the subject with a jaunty indifference, after half an hour's examination pronounce it 'a delusion,' and denounce those who believe in it as 'credulous,'—let me remind these gentlemen that the worst form of credulity is a persistent belief in the non-existence of things which do exist. In all their diatribes and philippics against Spiritualism, these persons have, in sooth, themselves shown an amount of credulity painful to consider.

"I am, Gentlemen, your obedient Servant,  
"Clifton, July 10, 1869."

"G. DAMIANI.

## PASSING EVENTS.—THE SPREAD OF SPIRITUALISM.

BY BENJAMIN COLEMAN.

IT is now very generally known that the Dialectical Society, numbering amongst its members persons of all shades of religious belief, and scientific study, appointed, some months ago, a committee charged with the duty of investigating the claims of Spiritualism. This committee, constituted of some 20 or 30 persons, under the presidency of Dr. James Edmunds, have received testimony, and held *séances* amongst themselves; and, as I mentioned in a former notice of their proceedings, they have already accumulated a mass of evidence from men and women of undoubted character and intelligence which, taken as a whole, is irresistible; therefore, when their formal report is published, one may safely predict it will acknowledge that even the most extraordinary phenomena at which the uninitiated have been accustomed to sneer cannot be rationally explained away. I expect "that spirit is the last thing they will give in to," but we know to that conviction they *must* come at last.

To the proceedings of this Society we may fairly attribute the fresh interest which has been infused into the subject, and which has compelled the Metropolitan and Provincial press to give Spiritualism more than usual prominence lately, and, in many instances, fair and respectful consideration. The *Times* (which has inserted one letter from a "proselyte" in favor of the subject, and has doubtless suppressed many others), the *Standard* and *Herald*, the *Pall Mall Gazette* and the *Echo* are notable exceptions. No one doubts the high character and influence of the *Times*; but it is certainly a mistake to call it the leading journal. It never does *lead* upon any great subject; it always *follows* public opinion. So that, notwithstanding its recent remarks when commenting upon the outrage committed in Spain upon Mr. Henry Jencken, we may expect and be not at all surprised to find it "thundering" some fine morning against the wide-spread doctrine which denies a soul and a future state of existence, and thanking God, that with "all its follies and fanaticism" there is Spiritualism, the anti-materialistic doctrine, more generally recognized than they had dreamed of, to meet the growing infidelity of the age.

But at this moment the *Times* considers Spiritualism "an exploded controversy," and encourages the Materialist to resist the evidence, even at the sacrifice of his own senses.

In concluding the article condemning the ignorance and fanaticism of the Spanish peasantry, it advises us—

Not to be over sanguine as to the civilising influence of mere school learning. Not a little has been and is being done in these islands towards the diffusion and improvement of popular instruction. Even more is being attempted in France, in Germany, in the United States. But what are we, then, to think of the spirit-rappers and all the legion of their American and European votaries? What are we to think of "spirit kisses, rocking chairs, migratory beds, guitars played by invisible agencies, and other experiences," for the authenticity of which men of the highest intellectual attainments make themselves vouchers? What are we to say when we come upon a party of friends, for whom on all other subjects we entertain the greatest esteem, as they sit gravely round a table in full expectation that the table will spin round, and in equally full conviction, after an hour or so, that they have seen it spin round, and that the spinning round of the table is a well-established phenomenon, never failing to reproduce itself unless it be under the baneful influence of some heathen hard of belief? What are we to say? Simply that to believe, and to believe what is least credible, what is least possible, is, apparently, one of the necessities of our poor human nature. Child-stealing in Lorca, spirit-rapping in New York or London, are but symptoms of the same infirmity.

Previous to the foregoing, a leader on "The Table-twisting Faith" had appeared in the *Echo*, which paper has from the first taken up a most foolish and offensive attitude against Spiritualism, though one of the proprietors is a recent convert to the phenomenal phase at least, and the Editor's brother, who is upon the staff of a much higher class paper, is an openly declared believer in Spiritualism.

A very influential Dialectician, who has a right to be heard in the columns of the *Echo*, took up the gauntlet thrown down by the latter and replied in the following letter, which, excepting a word or two, might have been written by any honest observer who is not afraid to call himself a Spiritualist:—

#### THE SPIRITUALIST CONTROVERSY.

*To the Editor of the "Echo."*

SIR,—The satire of your able article on "The Table-twisting Faith," may have a salutary effect upon the credulous crowd of believers in Spiritualism who crave for marvels and meet wonders more than half way. But it will be void of convincing force upon the minds of those who, having entered upon an investigation of the subject in the spirit of antagonism, have in the course of the inquiry witnessed astounding phenomena, which they feel quite unable to explain away by a supposed failure of the senses, or by suspecting their own sanity. I am one of this number. I believe the question has claims to be dealt with in a much more serious and reasoning method than it has yet received from men of science and the public press. It is not an "exploded controversy," as the *Times* of to-day affirms. As a contribution to the further inevitable discussion will you permit me to lay before your readers a brief statement of facts coming under my own observation within the last few days.

At the Countess de Pomar's rooms in Albermarle-street, there were present myself, a Spanish gentleman, Mr. Home, the celebrated medium, and three or four ladies. Mr. Home's manner strikes one as being singularly frank and ingenuous. Knowing that I and the other gentleman present were sceptical, he invited us to put such tests as we might consider needful in the course of any manifestations which might ensue. This permission we availed ourselves of to the utmost during the evening.

After being seated a short time, we all experienced a peculiar trembling communicated from our chairs, gradually increasing in intensity until it seemed to extend to the whole room. The sensation thus produced was very singular; not at all like the shaking that might result from the passing of heavy vehicles, but a pulsation or throbbing, apparently having its source deep down in the earth, such as has been described by persons who have felt the tremulous heavings of an earthquake. This lasted several minutes. Raps of various degrees of intensity and modifications of sound then proceeded from the table. I carefully examined under the table (a large round drawing-room one), and was perfectly satisfied that the sounds were not produced by trick or apparatus. Thumps and taps of various kinds then came from all parts of the room—from the walls, the floor, the backs of our chairs, the mirrors, and all over the table in showers. Coming and going at intervals, they gradually subsided. All the proceedings during the evening were conducted in the full light of a large chandelier. Continuing to sit round the table with our hands barely resting upon it, several violent tilts took place from opposite sides. Then rising altogether some inches from the ground, it remained a few seconds in the air without any visible support. From the position of the sitters, it seemed quite absurd to suppose that any of them could purposely or unconsciously produce the demonstrative movements that occurred. An accordion, purchased that day by the Countess at a music shop in the neighbourhood, was taken from a side table, and, after being examined by me and the other gentlemen to see that it was an instrument of the ordinary construction, Mr. Home grasped it at one end in his right hand, holding the key end downwards, below the level of the table, and having his left hand on the surface of the table. In a few minutes the accordion, full in my view, began to contract and expand, sounds of peculiar sweetness proceeded from it; snatches of tunes were played; it gave us a modern waltz (the name of which I forget), and concluded with some hymn-like melody. The table once more became restless, its motions obedient to the requests of Mr. Home. "Move towards this gentleman," said Mr. Home. It came towards me fully two feet along the floor. And so it moved as directed towards several persons in succession. At this stage of the proceedings a slight escape of gas caused Mr. Home to feel somewhat faint, and we adjourned to another room. Here we heard raps and saw table-tiltings, but before long Mr. Home went into a trance, and made in a subdued voice, certain communications to a lady, of facts which, she said, he could not in any ordinary way have become cognisant of. As I had no means of testing these communications, they made no impression upon me.

The testimonies of hundreds of upright and discerning men and women are not to be disposed of by a sneer. Granted that there is little spiritual significance in these manifestations, and that there is more soul's nutriment in a line of Milton than in all the messages ever spelt out by modern Spiritists—What then? Are facts to be ignored? And is it unscientific to doubt whether the line between the seen and unseen worlds is as "hard and fast" as is usually supposed in the materialistic philosophy of the age? I repeat, this is far from being an exploded controversy.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant, H. J.

At the commencement of the Dialectical Society's proceedings, the writer of this letter ("H. J.") in common with the majority of the committee, entered upon the "investigation of the subject in the spirit of antagonism." I know that he inspired one of the first leading articles written against Spiritualism in the *Echo*, and if he did not write the second leader, upon which I commented in the July number of this Magazine, in which it was said that rather than believe in the reality of the phenomena they would "take refuge in collusion, deception, self-revelation and rats," he at least did not as he does now, make a public protest against such foolishness.

This gentleman, however, as it will be seen, has changed his views, and he now tells the Editor, with whom he is intimately acquainted, that these things are true, and that "the testimonies of hundreds of upright and discerning men and women are not to be disposed of by a sneer." This is fair and candid and what every honest man would say when convinced of his error.

But does the Editor halt? Does he act as an honest faithful journalist and say to his friend, "You must not expect me to support your convictions and thereby to expose my ignorance, but I will be prudent, I will be silent, and admit no more abuse of Spiritualism in the columns of the *Echo*?" On the contrary, he continues to write as if the Dialectical Society had made up its mind to declare against "the delusion" of Spiritualism. Here is an extract from an article which appeared in the *Echo* about the same period as H. J.'s letter, and when it is certain the Editor knew his altered views.

The patience of the Dialectical Society is sublime. The society continues to take evidence on Spiritualism long after a very positive conclusion on the subject must have been formed in the minds of a vast majority of its members. Now, the mind cannot be kept in a state of unnatural balance on any question for an indefinite time; and the mind of the Dialectical Society, during this inquiry into Spiritualism, has been standing a very long while on one toe. It is pleasant, doubtless, to see philosophy in this attitude, but it is not very profitable; and the time seems to have arrived for bringing "the other foot" down on a verdict of "Fiddle-de-dee."

The *Daily Telegraph* gave full reports of the evidence taken by the Dialectical Society, without comment, and the French correspondent of that journal gives a very interesting fact connected with the Byron controversy which is just now occupying public attention. He says that *La Liberté*, M. Emile de Girardin's paper, states that the Marquise de Boissy (Countess Guicciolli) declares that her intercourse with Lord Byron has never ceased. She writes to the great poet, places before herself a large sheet of blue-wove paper, as Byron liked it, falls into a kind of ecstasy, lifts up her eyes to the ceiling, and a few minutes afterwards her hand runs on the paper involuntarily without her looking at it, and the answer comes. Doctor Cérise (a well-known French physician) it appears witnessed the phenomenon two years ago, and that very day Lord Byron's letter announced that "an American author was preparing to write on his life a book full of false and horrible things."\*

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\* To the uninitiated, I may as well state that writing through the hand of a medium is one of the phases of Spirit-communion. Some of these writings are very marvellous productions. In one case, some years ago, I showed to Mr. Robert Dale Owen, a mass of manuscript thus written, which subsequently formed a volume of nearly 200 pages of printed matter. In this M.S., though it had been written with great rapidity, and contained, as Mr. Owen said, some very fine thoughts, there was not one sentence transposed, nor one word erased from the beginning to the end.

The *Eastern Post* has given publicity to much interesting information laid before the Dialectical Society's Committee, of which the Editor is a member, and he has no doubt found it very profitable to give Spiritualism prominence in the pages of his now successful journal.

The *Queen*, an illustrated paper, has also devoted much space to report the proceedings of the Committee. It has had a series of articles upon Spiritualism carefully and candidly written, and apparently with its sanction, and which clearly indicate that phenomena of a very marked and conclusive character have been obtained through the unexpected mediumship of some of their own body.

The *Queen* makes the following reply to some remarks in the *Pall Mall Gazette*:—

In a recent article upon this subject, the *Pall Mall Gazette* complains that the Dialectical Society, instead of devoting itself to the investigation of the alleged phenomena by experiment and test, had wasted time in the worthless task of hearing merely what is said about it by believers. The complaint would have been perfectly reasonable (?) if it were only true. But, as our readers know, the work of investigation has been proceeding *pari passu* with the examination of witnesses. Two members of the committee have been invited to sittings with Mr. Home on two separate occasions, at two different private houses, in neither of which was anything in the nature of mechanical preparation possible. Each of these members has written a report of what he witnessed. Both relate simply what they saw without venturing to account in any way for the means by which effects were produced. As these introduce a series of phenomena other than have been as yet witnessed and experimented upon by the collective committee, we reserve them for future publication; the present enquiry being strictly limited to the investigation of those phenomena which are supported by external evidence, inasmuch as they are matters of physical measurement; and the actual occurrence of which, being palpable to the senses, is capable of demonstrative proof or disproof.

The *Morning Herald* and *Standard* have had a series of letters for and against Spiritualism, one of these, from a gentleman, with whom I am not acquainted, is written in so fair a spirit that I reproduce it:—

SIR,—I have read with interest and attention the letter of Mr. Percy Greg and your article upon "Spiritualism" in yesterday's paper, and it strikes me that in both, and in every disquisition upon the subject, there is an element left out which might with propriety be admitted into the discussion.

First, let me premise that, as a Catholic, I am forbidden to have any dealings with "witchcraft;" and that, as a man of education, I am not unduly credulous. Consequently I am no convert to Spiritualism, with which I desire to have very little to do.

But it seems to me that too much weight is attached to the scientific failure to account for the alleged phenomena. With all reverence I submit that science has nothing to do with the supernatural. The miracles recounted in the New Testament were not submitted to scientific tests, and science altogether fails to account for them. The revelations by means of the witch of Endor—the ascent into Heaven of the prophet Elias—and many other miracles in ancient and modern times, undoubtedly occurred, but all the investigations of science cannot explain how, nor why.

"There is nothing new under the sun," and it seems to me to be trifling with an important matter to say that these manifestations are to be disbelieved



solely on the ground that neither sense nor science can unravel the mystery. Nor is it to the point to argue that facts attested by unbiassed witnesses are to be contemptuously ignored because impostors make a trade of the credulity of the unwary.

By all means let there be an investigation, and let us account for the manifestations by scientific means, if possible; but do not let us lightly reject the evidence of eyewitnesses of unblemished reputation simply because we conceive that our nineteenth-century enlightenment, and civilisation, and the rest of it, has banished from the world all communication with the unseen and unknown.

I am not going further into the question, but it seems to me that my suggestion may be worthy of some consideration, since we may be upon the eve of some wonderful discovery with which our boasted knowledge has no connection, and our highly vaunted science no share.—I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,  
Sept. 4. G. H. GUEST.

Appreciating the tone and temper of this letter, I am bound to say that Mr. Guest is not very consistent. He commences by slighting Spiritualism, with which he desires to have little to do, insinuating that it is witchcraft; but, nevertheless, encourages investigation—thinks the subject is an important matter, which is trifled with by its opponents, and suggests that we may be upon the eve of some wonderful discovery, with which science has no connection. It would have been better if Mr. Guest had said, "I am a Roman Catholic, forbidden by my Church to dabble in these matters; but, knowing that some of our saints of the past, and many of our priests of the present day, were and are remarkable mediums, who have had and are still having very marvellous spiritual manifestations, I am anxious that a belief, which is thus sanctioned by my Church, should be substantiated, and the erroneous dogmas of the Protestant Church, which has driven Spiritualism out of it, despite the teaching of Saint Paul, should be thoroughly exposed." If this be a fair interpretation of Mr. Guest's real sentiments and his motive for joining in the controversy, I can only regret that he, "an educated man," should allow himself to be deluded by the erroneous teachings of his own Church, and be led to believe that Spiritualism is Diabolism, and opposed to Christianity.

There are among Spiritualists many shades of religious belief; but, if Mr. Guest be a reader of this Magazine, he must know that its principal contributors aim at the dissemination of pure Christianity; and, as the motto of this Magazine says, "Spiritualism recognizes a continuous divine inspiration in man. It aims, through a careful reverent study of facts, at a knowledge of the laws and principles which govern the occult forces of the universe; of the relations of spirit to matter; and of man to God and the spiritual world. It is thus catholic and progressive, leading to true religion as at one with the highest philosophy."

The *Morning Herald* and *Standard* are edited by Captain Hamber, a gentleman of undoubted character and intelligence; but who, like most mortals, has his weak side, and exhibits his

prejudices against Spiritualism by the admission into his journals of letters from Mr. John H. Addison, containing statements so thoroughly absurd and untenable as should make the least respectable editor ashamed of his *protégé*. It would be only charitable to assume, that when Captain Hamber permitted Mr. Addison to commence the controversy in the pages of the *Herald* and *Standard*, he could not have seen the oft-recorded decisions of men standing high in the estimation of all Englishmen; William Howitt, Dr. Garth Wilkinson, Dr. Robert Chambers, Cromwell Varley, and many others, who, after years of close study and investigation of Spiritualism and its phenomena, endorse the opinions of Professor De Morgan, the well-known mathematician, who in his masterly preface to Mrs. De Morgan's excellent book, *From Matter to Spirit*, published by Longmans', says: "I am perfectly convinced that I have both seen and heard, in a manner which should make unbelief impossible, things called spiritual, which cannot be taken by a rational being to be capable of explanation by imposture, coincidence, or mistake. So far I feel the ground firm under me."

Mr. Addison says in his several letters: "My experience has been peculiar and varied. I took up Spiritualism for a year or two as a pastime, and I accomplished many feats which the Spiritualists insist must have been accomplished by spiritual agency." "I hold that no one knows what to call supernatural till he knows what has been accomplished, on the one hand with impudence, and on the other with invention and good acting by confessed tricksters like myself." "I have a table that can be wound up on the alarum principle, to go off at a certain time. It often does so, and wanders about the furniture in such a weird way, that I have been as much astonished by its vagaries as any one present." "I was once the sole unbeliever around a table at a table-moving *séance*. Nothing satisfied me. At last I declared that I would not believe all was fair, unless I was allowed to go under the table. I did so and directly I got there put my back up and gave the table a lurch, which almost sent the glasses off it, crying out at the same time that some one was tilting the table up. I got up in simulated indignation at being made a fool of." "On one occasion I felt quite remorseful after a trick which I played. I assembled a *séance* of spinsters, and taking off my boots—made as Spiritualist performer's boots usually are on purpose—I slipped round the room, buffeted the ladies with a sofa pillow, and smashed the tea cups on the table; when lights were brought the poor ladies said it had been "beautiful," and on departing took away bits of the crockery as relics." \* \* \* "The main difficulty is this: you cannot say to a respectable and educated man, 'Sir, you are

either a dupe or an accomplice in imposture,' and yet it is true in every case in which Spiritualism is believed in."

The foregoing is a short digest of Mr. Addison's letters to the editor of the *Herald* and *Standard*, and as he has accepted and published these remarkable statements without comment or rebuke, it is a legitimate inference that Captain Hamber's own views upon Spiritualism are fairly represented by Mr. Addison; and that he really believes such men as De Morgan, Robert Chambers, and Varley, *are* either dupes or impostors.

Mr Addison also says Mrs. Marshall is an impostor, and that at a *séance* with her, he "caught hold of her naked foot with a pencil between her toes," by which the so-called spiritual writing is done. Mrs. Marshall denies this emphatically; she has written to the editor to say she only saw Mr. Addison once about four years ago, and no such thing happened on that or any other occasion. None of the recognised defenders of Spiritualism have thought Mr. Addison's statements worthy of notice, but Mr. Percy Greg, himself a distinguished journalist, well known to Captain Hamber, and until within a short period an entire unbeliever in the spiritual phenomena, has written three letters in opposition to Mr. Addison's, and in support of the integrity of Mrs. Marshall's mediumship, so far as his own experiences have gone. He says, "All that I can testify to is, that tables are moved in an extraordinary way, and by no agency with which we are as yet scientifically acquainted, and to this I *can* unhesitatingly bear witness." Mr. Addison replied to Mr. Greg in a vein of satirical sympathy, and Mr. Greg's last letter, written in a very dignified and logical tone, contemptuously disposes of Mr. Addison, by telling his friend, the editor:—

"Here I leave Mr. Addison: however much mud he may choose, and you permit him, to fling in future, I shall not notice him again." "I believe that Mrs. Marshall's exhibition, so far as I have described it, is not due to trickery of any kind."

The readers of this Magazine know that there is nothing new in the controversy. The facts and philosophy of Spiritualism have been fully stated in its pages throughout the ten years of its existence. We only marvel that Spiritualism should be so little known; that its claims should have been so persistently disregarded by the leaders of public opinion in the literary and scientific world; and that the explanations of a practical joker can find a place in decent journals. I have stood amazed and amused at some of the questions put by *learned* members of the Dialectical Society, when cross-examining witnesses, and it has flashed across my mind, contrary to my previous convictions, that after all, much of the opposition of the Press arises from real and not simulated ignorance.

Indeed, one journalist, who has recently been "reading up" and investigating the facts, in reply to a remark I made that these press writers knew they were misleading the public, said I was mistaken, and gave himself as an instance to the contrary. But they must accept the alternative. They use their power to denounce and deny without enquiry and without knowledge. They are a band of wilfully blind men who have been leading the multitude astray, and we have yet to see how many of them will have the candour to recant their errors.

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LORD DUNRAVEN UPON SPIRITUALISM.

Not the least important incident in proof of the spread of Spiritualism in this country is the printing for private circulation of a volume by Viscount Adare, with a preface by Lord Dunraven, in which their experiences with those of others who have, through the mediumship of Mr. Home, witnessed a series of marvellous manifestations, are recorded. It is to be regretted that but a few copies of the book, and those for private circulation only, have been issued. Since their lordships have had the manliness to openly proclaim their adhesion to the truth and reality of Spiritualism, it is difficult to appreciate their motives for confining this knowledge to the circle of their immediate friends, and we may therefore hope that their lordships will change their resolution and permit the book to have a wide circulation.

In addition to the foregoing evidence of the general interest which the subject commands at the present moment in England, there are two gentlemen with whom I am acquainted, connected with scientific journalism, who are closely looking into the facts and varied phases of Spiritualism, and who commenced their investigations with a view of extinguishing "the delusion" which has taken so strong a hold upon the public mind. But "the extinguishers have caught fire." Both have seen enough to satisfy them of a great reality, and one is already promulgating its truths in a quiet way in his own sphere of action; the other is earnestly at work accumulating evidence, and when he is fully fortified I have every reason to believe that he will not only announce his convictions in the pages of a leading journal which are open to him, but he will prepare forthwith a suitable paper to be read to one of the learned bodies of which he is a member; thus we may expect that a fresh stimulus will be given to the controversy, and no one who has calmly considered its claims can doubt that Spiritualism will ere long take its place as an impregnable truth, entitled to the respectful consideration of every thinking man and woman whose minds are not fettered by religious bigotry or scientific fallacies.

## A "SITTING" WITH MRS. EVERETT.

Related by Mr. S. C. HALL.

ON Friday, July 18th, 1869, I attended a sitting at the house of Mr. and Mrs. Everett, 26, Penton Street, Pentonville.

There were present the Countess de Pomar, Miss Anna Blackwell, Mr. Nesbit (printer), of Glasgow, Mrs. Nesbit, and Mr. Pearce (the three last named I had not previously seen, the two first named accompanied us to the house), and Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall.

The room in which we met is small, and the evening was intensely hot; so hot that the usual window curtains had been removed; the "atmosphere" was therefore unfavourable, and more than an hour passed before manifestations commenced.

The peculiar manifestation associated with the medium—Mrs. Everett—is what has been termed "audible voices;" that is to say, voices apparently human, so far as tone and language are concerned, are heard; not in isolated word, or detached sentences, but in conversations—continuing during an hour or more uninterruptedly. These sittings are always in the dark; there must be, indeed, total darkness. Also, a paper tube is to some extent a necessary accompaniment of these sittings; the spirit who speaks is understood to speak through it. I say, "to some extent"—for on this occasion (and on a previous occasion) at my request, the spirit spoke for some minutes without the tube, telling me this: "The tube is not necessary; but we condense in it the breath of the medium, and we are thus able to use her for a longer time; we do not, as some think we do, speak by her lips." When the spirit spoke without the tube, it was the same voice, only it had lost the peculiar tone it had received in passing through the tube.

The spirit who speaks by the aid of the medium calls himself "John Watt;" his language is remarkably refined; there is no taint of vulgar intonation or common phraseology, such as we almost invariably meet in persons of comparatively humble condition, and uneducated. On my remarking this, and asking him had he been in a high or low position while in this life, he replied, "I was in what you would call a low position; I was a mechanic engineer; but I have progressed greatly since I left earth." I asked him how long ago that was: he answered, "Of your time it is 32 years, and I had been 30 years on earth when I was called from it." The voice is clear; each word being distinctly heard in a loud whisper; neither slowly nor rapidly; the enunciation is sometimes emphatic, and generally impressive.

Why darkness is a requisite, and why a tube should be an auxiliary at such sittings I do not guess, farther than I have explained; but in all such cases (and that to which I am referring, although by far the most perfect and the "holiest" of any of which I have heard—is by no means a solitary case of the kind—audible voices) both seem to be essential. I proceed with details from the commencement to the end of the "sitting" I have undertaken to describe. While the party was being arranged about a large square table (and the arrangement was not a matter of chance, but was made by some unseen power dictating by raps), the heavy table and the entire room were repeatedly and strongly shaken, the chairs on which we were seated were shaken and moved; (that was before the light was put out). We were then directed (still by raps) to read the sixth chapter of the Acts,\* which I did; and then to pray; which we all did, silently, but I believe fervently; my own prayer was mainly that God would keep from us all evil influences, and give us only the influences of the holy and the good. After waiting more than half an hour, the medium became entranced; she was apparently rigid, her eyes were closed, and she seemed to have lost all will. She was moved, seemingly by no power of her own, to seat herself upon another chair about a foot from the end of a cottage piano. Leaning sideways over the treble end of the instrument, which was closed, she made passes as though magnetizing it. No sooner had she ceased to make passes over the piano than we distinctly heard the upper strings vibrating, and producing soft, wild, snatches of sound, something like the distant tones of an *Æolian* harp. All this time the medium sat passive, her hands on her lap distinctly visible by the light of a candle, at the distance of a foot from the piano. She had placed the tube on the top of the piano, and the candle was extinguished. Soon we heard a tramp, tramp, of measured footsteps in all parts of the room, and presently a whispering voice sounded from the direction of the medium—"The blessing of God and the Lord Christ be with you, dear friends; I fear I shall not do much to-night; the atmosphere is unfavourable; I cannot see you clearly; the room is full of mist."

The persons present, each and all, then questioned the spirit John Watt. It would extend this notice far too much to give in detail the conversation that now ensued. To some of our questions, the spirit replied, "I do not know;" to others, "I am not permitted to answer that." To one lady he said, "You desire to know too much of too many things in Spiritualism; you are like the butterfly that goes from flower to flower and

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\* A circumstance that had occurred to me some weeks before made the last verse of this chapter peculiarly applicable and impressive.

gets nothing." Mrs. Hall asked him if he prayed in the sphere in which he now was. He answered, "Certainly." Prayer was continual with them, not in phrases, but in spirit; and he quoted—repeating them slowly and with remarkably grave emphasis—these two well-known verses by James Montgomery:—

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,  
Uttered or unexpressed:  
The motion of a hidden fire  
That trembles in the breast.

Prayer is the burden of a sigh,  
The falling of a tear:  
The upward glancing of an eye,  
When none but God is near.

Not remembering at the moment the author of these verses, I asked him by whom they were written, but he did not know. Among other things, John Watt told us that persons should never come to sittings in dresses of silk—silk being a non-conductor of electricity. Dresses should be of cotton or wool, which have also the advantage of not rustling.

On a previous occasion I had asked him as to the form he now had. He said it was the body he had on earth, spiritualized—a spiritual body. "But," I said, "if you had been hunchbacked while on earth, how would it be now?" He said, "I should have no hunchback here; but if I was visible to you (which I could be, but not with this mediumship) I should appear to you with a hunchback in order that you might recognise me." I had asked him if I had known him on earth whether I should know him in his present condition. On that occasion he brought with him a little boy who told, in a boy's small voice, a touching story of his sad experience and death by violence on earth, and of his present happy state.

Several times during the sitting I am describing, we saw lights in various parts of the room; they resembled that which is given out by the glow-worm; but one was much larger, apparently six inches in length. I asked John Watt to explain them; he said he could not do so then—he must soon leave us, for the medium was becoming exhausted; but before he left us he hoped we should hear the music he knew we all desired to hear.

It was explained by Mr. Everett that his wife's guardian spirit sometimes brought with her several child spirits, who played on the piano that occupied one part of the room. He hoped that manifestation might be given to-night. We waited patiently. The candle was then directed to be lit, by raps demanding the alphabet, and we saw the medium seated as she was when she first occupied the chair, rigid, her eyes closed, and

apparently unconscious; the tube on the top of the piano, her right arm leaning on the piano, supporting her head. The light was again extinguished, when sounds issued from the piano; the keys seemed to be lightly struck several times; its cover was down, it was an ordinary cottage piano, the top was covered with books, a heavy inkstand, and two china candlesticks (they had been placed there from the table, when it was cleared for us to sit). (It was subsequently closely inspected by me and by others.) To have removed the top, in order to set free the front, would have been a work of time and noise, some of us were seated within two feet of it, and the room is very small.

Suddenly we heard a faint, sweet melody, not played on the keys, but on the wires; it was as if a harp was played, just such as I have heard from a player on a Welsh harp, where all the strings are wires: the melody continued for full five minutes; those present who are musical describe it as of great beauty, and great originality; it was sometimes louder and sometimes softer—dying away at length into a murmur of sound, and having an echo, so to speak, of inexpressible delicacy and sweetness.

Mrs. Hall says: "The touch on the keys of the piano was like a *child's touch*, picking out one note after the other; but that on the wires was the touch of an accomplished player, feeling melody, and understanding harmony, and especially expression."

John Watt, when it was over, said, "I am very glad you have heard that music." Mrs. Hall asked, "Have you any music where you now are?" "Oh," he said, "music infinitely more beautiful than that." He told us the guardian spirit of Mrs. Everett had told him that morning why she was specially permitted to attend upon her. Her name was Anne Blower (the name has long been known to Mr. and Mrs. Everett). He said, "This morning Anne told me what made her wish to be with Mrs. Everett. When she was a little girl at school, Anne was her teacher, and as teacher she recommended all the girls to get a little book, and set down in it all good and evil thoughts—all good and evil actions—that occurred to them, or that they had done—there were a few girls who got the books, and began attending to their teacher's advice—but all except one failed in the perfect truthfulness that was required—they did not enter what was against themselves—only what was in their favour—but Mrs. Everett put down *everything*; she was perfectly true, and that won the heart of Anne so much that she desired to be with her to help her, because she was and is true. After that John Watt said, I must go now; but not without my prayer: "May God and our Lord Christ bless you, comfort you, help you, and give you happiness in this world, and in that to which



in due time you will come. May His light guide you, and His help be with you here and hereafter. Amen."

The sitting closed, the candle was re-lit, and the medium was as I have described her.

Now, I have merely related the facts as they occurred during the two hours occupied in the sitting. I could of course add much. We asked at least 50 questions, to most of which the spirit gave you not only intelligent, but singularly terse and sensible replies.

Fraud is out of the question; it is a sheer impossibility that a human hand could have played on the wires of the piano, removing and replacing the top and front, and the books and other things placed on the top.

The medium is—I do not speak it disrespectfully—not an educated person, she cannot play on any musical instrument; she has never under any circumstances received payment for the exercise of her gift; she is the wife of a humble though highly intelligent man, in trade a tailor; and in no way could he or she be benefitted by these manifestations; indeed the contrary is the fact.

But I say fraud was impossible during the five evenings I have witnessed these manifestations, accompanied by several persons as scrupulously, nay, as suspiciously inquiring as myself. Such sittings—and some even more astonishing than this—are of frequent occurrence in this house. But two of these sittings, nearly as remarkable as the one I have been describing, took place in my house. Moreover, I trust I shall induce belief (as I believe) that there are few persons so utterly abandoned to evil as solemnly to ask God's blessing on a pre-arranged and pre-determined fraud; that a man and woman largely esteemed and respected in all the relations of life, good, as parents, friends, and neighbours, could be so entirely wicked as blasphemously to implore God's aid, and then wilfully to devise a profitless cheat.

I am sure that they themselves believe in these manifestations as truly as Martha and Mary believed in the raising from death of Lazarus, their brother. And I do not for one moment hesitate to express *my* entire conviction that these manifestations are real, true, holy, and emphatically for good; and that Mrs. Everett is as guiltless of fraud as Mrs. S. C. Hall, or any other of her guests.

S. C. HALL.

We, who were present at the sitting on the 18th of July, testify to the accuracy of the above details.

ANNA BLACKWELL,  
M. DE MEDINA DE POMAR,  
ANNA MARIA HALL,  
HAY NESBIT,  
HELEN NESBIT.

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

## INSTANCE OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE IN ANSWER TO PRAYER.

We take the following paragraph from a recent number of the *Banner of Light*:—

The fact that there is a Divine Presence and Power ever near us to listen to our requests and to give us aid when it is possible, is proved by very many instances both in the past and present. The honoured and talented Washington Allston possessed great faith in this over-shadowing Power in his later life. In his younger days he was accustomed to ridicule religious things, and would jest upon what was most sacred to others.

It then proceeds to relate the following anecdote of Allston, which, however, we prefer to give in the exact words of his biographer:—

Soon after Allston's marriage with his first wife, the sister of the late Dr. Channing, he made his second visit to Europe. After a residence there of little more than a year, his pecuniary wants became very pressing and urgent—more so than at any other period of his life. On one of these occasions, as he himself used to narrate the event, he was in his studio, reflecting with a feeling of almost desperation upon his condition. His conscience seemed to tell him that he had deserved his afflictions and drawn them upon himself by his want of due gratitude for past favours from heaven. His heart seemed filled all at once with the hope that God would listen to his prayers, if he would offer up his direct expressions of penitence, and ask for Divine aid. He accordingly locked his door, withdrew to a corner of the room, threw himself upon his knees, and prayed for a loaf of bread for himself and his wife. While thus employed, a knock was heard at the door. A feeling of momentary shame at being detected in this position, and a feeling of fear lest he might have been observed, induced him to hasten and open the door. A stranger inquired for Mr. Allston. He was anxious to learn who was the fortunate purchaser of the "Angel Uriel," regarded by the artist as one of his master-pieces, which had won the prize at the Exhibition of the Academy. He was told that it had not been sold.

"Can it be possible? Not sold? Where is it to be had?" "In this very room. Here it is," producing the painting from the corner, and wiping off the dust. "It is for sale, but its value has never yet, to my idea of its worth, been adequately appreciated, and I would not part with it." "What is its price?" "I have done affixing any nominal sum. I have always, so far, exceeded my offers, I leave it for you to name the price." "Will four hundred pounds be an adequate recompense?" "It is more than I have ever asked for it." "Then the painting is mine." The stranger introduced himself as the Marquis of Stafford, and became, from that moment, one of the warmest friends of Mr. Allston. By him Mr. A. was introduced to the society of the nobility and gentry; and he became one of the most favoured among the many gifted minds that adorned the circle, in which he was never fond of appearing often. The instantaneous relief thus offered by the liberality of this noble visitor, was always regarded by Allston as a direct answer to his prayer, and it made a deep impression upon his mind. To this event he was ever after wont to attribute the increase of devotional feelings, which became a prominent trait in his character.

Suppose, now, it should be said that it was not Allston's prayer that procured this benefit, for the stranger was at the door while Allston was upon his knees. He must, therefore, have been influenced before Allston prayed. But what if God, willing to make his mercy felt all the more forcibly, was

pleased to give Allston the prayer and send the man at the same time? It seems that he had about concluded that God would so attend to him, if he would acknowledge his ingratitude and ask for Divine aid. Now to say that in his case the help would have come without the prayer, is to talk foolishly. In *this* case it was a part of the necessary connection; and we might as well say that some other stranger could have been sent, or that the money could have been given without parting with the picture:—folly, folly of mere natural reasoning. *The Almighty Lord chose this way and no other.* That Allston did not understand the philosophy of it is nothing to the purpose. That he might have ascribed *too much* effect to his prayer, is nothing to the purpose. That *he* could not precisely adjust the Divine and human agencies is all nothing. It had the desired effect upon his mind, made a deep impression, and increased his devotional feelings ever after.

The *Banner* remarks:—

This instantaneous answer to his prayer seemed to him a proof of the Divine power, and he ever afterward thought reverently of the influences that guarded him. He became a religious man in the sense of true religion, that aspires to do the best and seeks for guidance and aid from the spiritual world.

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EXTRACT FROM A PRIVATE LETTER TO AN ENQUIRER INTO  
THE PHENOMENA OF MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

Your letter shews that you are an earnest seeker after truth, and in the right way too; if you do not press the facts too hard, after the manner of the scientific enquirers of the day. My own opinion is, that there are other facts besides the phenomena to be looked into. For instance, the great fact that in all ages, in all nations, in all religions, and under all circumstances of persecutions—men have testified to the happening of these facts. Their testimonies thus become facts of themselves of the highest importance, and what they have said forms a body of Spiritualism, in respect of which all that you or any individual could witness in his lifetime would be as nothing.

I am in favour, therefore, of recommending the reading of the whole body of spiritual literature, which reflects the collective information of humanity, rather than running about after some little medium shows.

Perhaps I am more inclined to this view from not valuing my own powers of observation much above other people's; whilst those who must see for themselves form the contrary opinion of their own faculties.

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HENRY WARD BEECHER, ON EVIL SPIRITS.

“It is argued sometimes that the benevolence of God would not permit disembodied spirits to work mischief among men on earth.

“In reply to that, I have only to say that He does, right before our eyes, permit embodied spirits to work mischief among men on earth; and that through long years. If devils are worse than some men, I am sorry for hell. If there is more

malignity, more malice, more selfishness, more heartlessness, more cruelty in the other world than in this, I am mistaken. I cannot conceive that a spirit is worse because it has lost its body."

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THOMAS CARLYLE ON THE CONSEQUENCES OF HUMAN  
ACTIONS.

"Consequences good and evil, blessed and accursed, it is very clear, do follow from all our actions here below, and prolong, and propagate, and spread themselves into the infinite, or beyond our calculation and conception; but whether the notion of reward and penalty be not, on the whole, rather a human one, transferred to that immense divine fact, has been doubtful to many. Add this consideration, which the best philosophy teaches us, 'that the very consequences (not to speak of the penalties at all) of evil actions die away, and become abolished, long before eternity ends: that it is only the consequences of good actions that are eternal—for these are in harmony with the laws of this universe, and add themselves to it, and co-operate with it for ever; while all that is in *disharmony* with it must necessarily be without continuance, and soon fall dead,—as perhaps you have heard in the sound of a Scottish psalm amid the mountains, the true notes alone *support* one another, and the psalm, which was discordant enough near at hand, is a perfect melody when heard from afar. On the whole, I must account it but a morbid, weak imagination that shudders over this wondrous divine universe as a place of despair to any creature; and, contrarywise, a most degraded human sense, sunk down to the region of the *brutal* (however common it be) that in any case remains blind to the *infinite* difference there ever is between right or wrong for a human creature—or God's law and the devil's law."

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A LETTER IN THE TIMES.

Some remarks on Spiritualism in the *Times* newspaper have elicited a letter from "A Proselyte," who sends his name and address. The *Times* prints it as what—for want of knowing better—it is pleased to style "an illustration of our domestic superstitions." "A Proselyte" says:—

In 1863, one of my sisters was visiting a lady who had a niece possessed of wonderful power. One morning, my sister was seated on a large sofa, and the subject was introduced. She expressed great doubts, on which the young lady requested my sister to place her hand on the mahogany frame of the sofa. The young lady placed her hand on the opposite part, and immediately the sofa moved away from its position, and came violently in contact with the dining table. My sister was frightened and got up, and subsequently the young lady asked her to get on the table. This she did, and being again requested to place her hand on it, the operator placed hers also, and without a moment's

delay the table moved towards the bow window. My sister jumped down and looked fearfully at the lady.

A few months after my sister related this to me. I was as well acquainted with the parties as she was. It happened that in the following year, 1864, I came with my family to London, and, among other visitors, the aunt and niece called one morning, while we were at lunch. We mentioned the circumstances which I have related, and on expressing our doubts the aunt said her niece did not like to shew her power, as she really felt frightened at it herself, and her father strongly objected to her displaying it, but as we were such old friends she would not mind showing us, provided any one had the influence necessary to assist her.

My wife went to a heavy arm chair, which is in my house at this moment, and being of rather an excitable temperament the lady thought she might aid her power. The hands were placed, my wife's on one side and the lady's on the other. The chair instantly moved several feet with my wife on it, who got up in fright and astonishment. I said, "To satisfy me, will you try to move the cabinet piano?" which stood against the wall. The two ladies placed their hands at the extreme ends of the piano, which advanced out from the wall some distance.

At that moment a young man-servant was in the room clearing away the lunch, and, looking with surprise, the lady said, "I wonder if George has any power?" He was requested to place his hand on the dining table. The lady placed hers, and the table with all the lunch things on it made a dash towards the fire-place, and the boy was fixed against the wall. His fright can only be judged of by those who witnessed it.

A round table, mahogany, was standing in the bow window; one of the castors was off. The young lady touched it accidentally at the same time that my wife's hand was on it, looking at the boy's wondering gaze. A noise was heard coming from the table, which ultimately moved hastily towards the window, and there it remained close to the frame. All this occurred in my dining room at Maida Hill. We were afterwards told that on one occasion in her own house the servants wanted to move a four-post bed, and, not being able, the housemaid said, "Let us ask Miss M—— to assist us." She came up, and, telling the servant to place a hand upon the wooden post at the foot, the young lady placing hers on the other, the bed moved forward, and would have proceeded, had not the lady and servant taken off their hands. The bed required men's aid to get it back again to its original place, being large and heavy. I give you the names at foot for private information, to satisfy you of the truth of these very extraordinary circumstances.

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#### WARNED IN A DREAM.

A provincial contemporary is responsible for the following:—A few days ago a serious accident occurred in Bulmer village to a picnic party going to Castle Howard, Durham. The party made the journey in an omnibus, and it seems that the wife of one of the men hesitated to join the party, and tried to persuade her husband not to go, because she had dreamt a week before that they were in an omnibus and were upset on going through a village, and greatly injured, fright awakening her. The man and his wife, however, did go, but on reaching Bulmer the woman became greatly excited. Not only, she remarked, was the omnibus that which she had seen in her dream, but the village was that in which the accident she dreamt of happened. The words were scarcely uttered when the omnibus was upset, and a scene of great confusion resulted. Those on the outside were thrown to the ground with great violence; one man was rendered insensible by the omnibus falling upon him, and several sustained rather serious injuries. The woman to whom the accident was revealed before-hand was herself badly hurt, but her husband's was the worse case, he sustaining a dislocation of an ankle. Medical aid was quickly procured, the sufferers were relieved, and afterwards conveyed to their homes. Every incident in the accident seems to have been pictured in the premonitory dream.—*Star*, 29<sup>th</sup> July, 1869.

### THE THREE THEORIES OF LIFE.

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As I walk along the street I see a scaffold round a building, men on the scaffold at work, and others ascending and descending with hods heavily laden, and the question forces itself on me, Is the object of this heavy labour the mere sustenance of life?

I open *Homes without Hands* and read, "The cocoon (of the *Saturnia Promethea* moth) is placed within the leaf of the tree and secured by a strong web; but as the leaf would fall before the moth could escape, a strange instinct is implanted in the insect, which fastens the stem of the leaf to the branch by sundry silken threads, so that although it may wither and part from the branch it cannot fall to the ground."

The evidence of design, skill, and foresight the action of this moth displays, convinces me some higher end must be hid in human drudgery than the mere sustenance of life. The idea of the character of the mighty Former which the action of the moth impresses on me makes me sure that a result will spring from the labour I see, which I shall one day recognize as not only worthy of all its oppression, but as far surpassing in its grandeur any dreams I can dream.

I cast about for theories of life which shall uphold, or destroy, these conclusions, and find three theories.

One theory, that all creation is maintained by the immediate inspiration of God, and breathes from His presence alone—that, practically, all is God.

Another theory, that God is the Ruler-in-Chief, and that men and brutes have a semi-independent life; that men are free within certain limits called "the limits of freedom"—limits known to God alone.

A third theory, that all is man and creation, and God non-existent; or if He be existent, that He is wholly incomprehensible to man.

Of these three theories, if the first be established, not only does the action of the moth at once explain itself, but it follows also that the labour of the men on the scaffold is producing a work of God; and a work of God means a perfect work; one, the wisdom and goodness of which is ever more than the imagination and desire of man can fathom; and one, the wisdom and goodness of which will ever become more manifest to man the more he learns the nature of God, or the older he grows.

If of these three theories, the second be established, the action of the moth has to be sheltered under the word "instinct"—a new name no more—and the labour of the men on the scaffold

may be the needful foundation of no grand superstructure, but instead, while the wisest doings of men, be blindness and folly.

The third theory professedly deals only with modes of amelioration and improvement, and bids us look for all hope and foresight to men alone. It closes, therefore, our enquiry at once with the word 'vanity.'

Which of these three theories has most appearance of truth? I do not say, which is true? but, which do we think true? For we shall find none of them free from intellectual doubt, explain them how we may.

On the first theory—If all be God, how we come to feel ourselves the separate individuals we seem, and fight and contend with each other, and do evil as we do, is inexplicable. We can understand that if we can be made to do these things, we shall come to feel ourselves other than God;\* and we can further understand, how, when the illusion of our independence is thus induced in us, God can deal with us as the independent creatures we feel ourselves. In what way, however, if we are but portions of Himself, God creates in us a sense of independence and a power for evil deeds, we cannot understand. We must acknowledge that this is unfathomable, and simply accept the fact.

On the second theory,—if man has a real independence, and the limits of that independence are wide enough for the whole race, if it pleases, to wreck itself for ever, God has departed from the world as far as the Atheist says He is gone—there is no God existent of any value to men. While, if we consider that every man—or a sufficient number of men to satisfy God—will at last certainly be saved, then all, practically, becomes God on this theory as certainly as on the first; for God must have foreseen this general result, and this foresight implies that our nature is such that man in the aggregate, as regards his salvation, obeys law and not impulse, and therefore (since man in the aggregate is made up of individual men) that each individual, as regards his salvation, obeys law—a law which God has appointed.

The second theory, therefore, carries about it the seeds of its own dissolution, and appears but to await absorption in the first theory or the last.

The last theory comes before us with its intellectual difficulty also, for we find it regardless of the forethought and design the silken threads of the moth so strangely manifest, regardless also of the unity and interblending of creation, where deep answers so audibly to deep. If, indeed, this theory does observe these things, it refuses to trace the forethought and unity they display

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\* See *A Home for the Homeless, or, Union with God*; reviewed lately in these pages, which is occupied with this explanation.

to one Creative Being. To believe in no God with such evidence speaking to me, is impossible for me; and to say He is wholly incomprehensible, but sets me thinking how far I can comprehend Him. If, indeed, I am unable to believe in no God, then (the reader will see) I believe that all is God, and that, therefore, every step in knowledge—from the first infantile scream to the most distant breath of man—is a step in the knowledge of Him who, to the last, will remain the Unfathomed.

Of these three theories none, then, wholly satisfies the intellect. The first, however, fully satisfies the heart, while the last wholly ignores it. The middle theory, in its atheistical aspect, as little contents the heart as the atheistical theory itself,—while in its deistical aspect, it is the first theory put in an unphilosophical form and not pushed to its legitimate results.

This middle theory—the least sound and tenable of the three—is the popular theory of the day, and walks and behaves with all the air of the one which has the nine points of the law in its favour—possession. In the cry for woman's rights, and in a thousand other forms, the heart of man is making its existence known, and it wants but the impulsion of the heart, to shew the intellect the slippery ground the middle theory offers.

When we seriously consider these three theories of life, I am surely justified in claiming for the one, which is at least as free from intellectual difficulty as any of the three, and which alone wholly satisfies the heart, a prospect of a long and beneficial career? I speak of the splendid theory of life which sees the effect of the immediate presence of God in the silken threads of the moth, and an eternal temple of unimagined magnificence being reared by the labour of the men on the scaffold, so full of toil and drudgery to-day.

HORACE FIELD.

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## Correspondence.

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To the Editor of the "*Spiritual Magazine*."

160 bis, Avenue d'Eylau,  
Paris, Sept. 3, 1869.

SIR,—Will you kindly state, in the next number of the *Spiritual Magazine*, that the one of my sisters to whose experience I alluded in my statement at the last meeting of the Dialectical Society was *not* Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell. Neither she nor Dr. Emily Blackwell know anything of Spiritualism, and are (as yet) opposed to it, as are most persons who have no personal knowledge of the matter; and the mixing up of Dr. Elizabeth's name with mine in this connexion is merely the result of an error on the part of the reporter of the *Eastern Post*, in whose first edition of the number of August 15th the mistaken statement was first made, but was omitted, at my request, in the second edition.

Yours truly,

ANNA BLACKWELL.